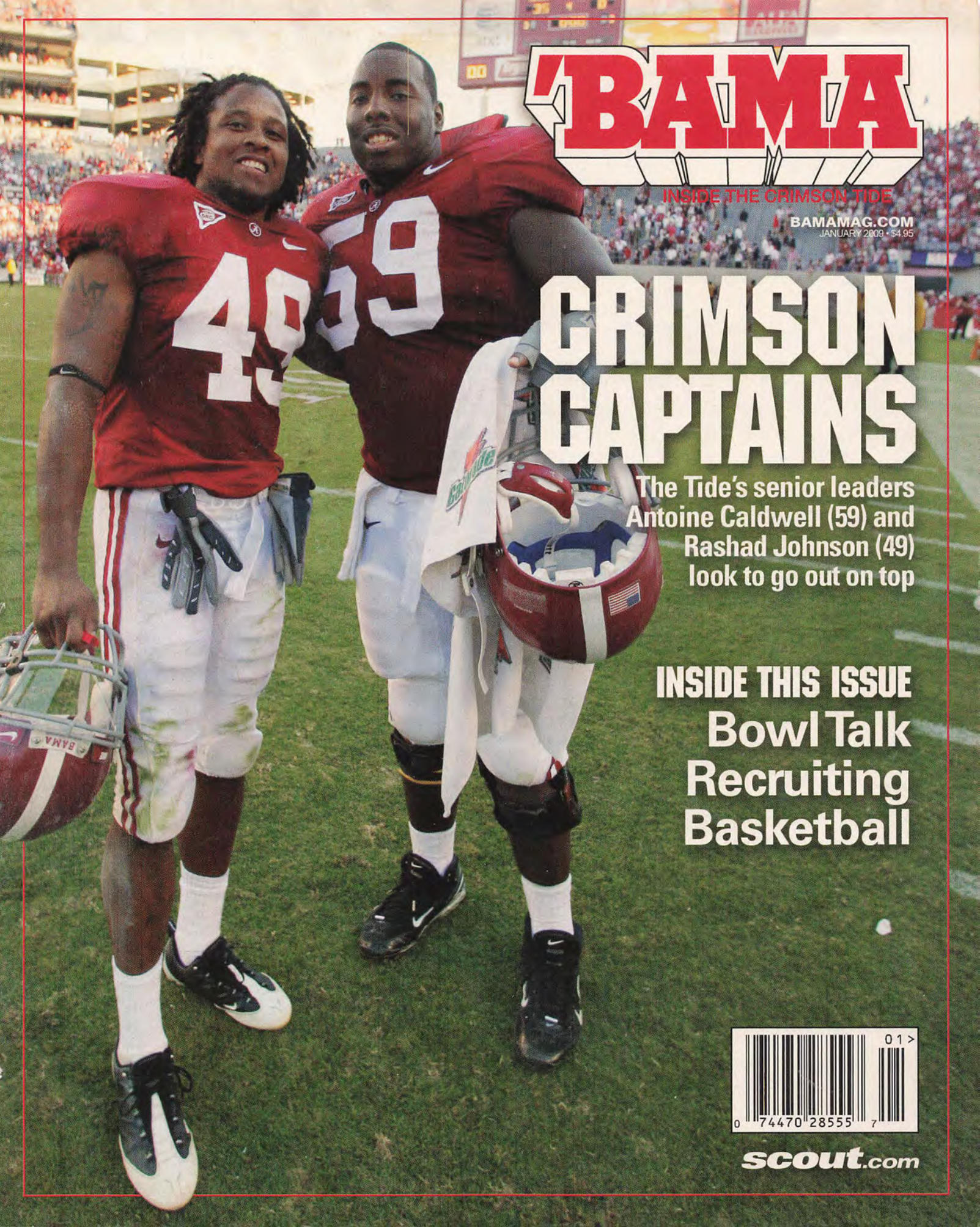


'BAMA

INSIDE THE CRIMSON TIDE

BAMAMAG.COM
JANUARY 2009 • $4.95

CRIMSON CAPTAINS

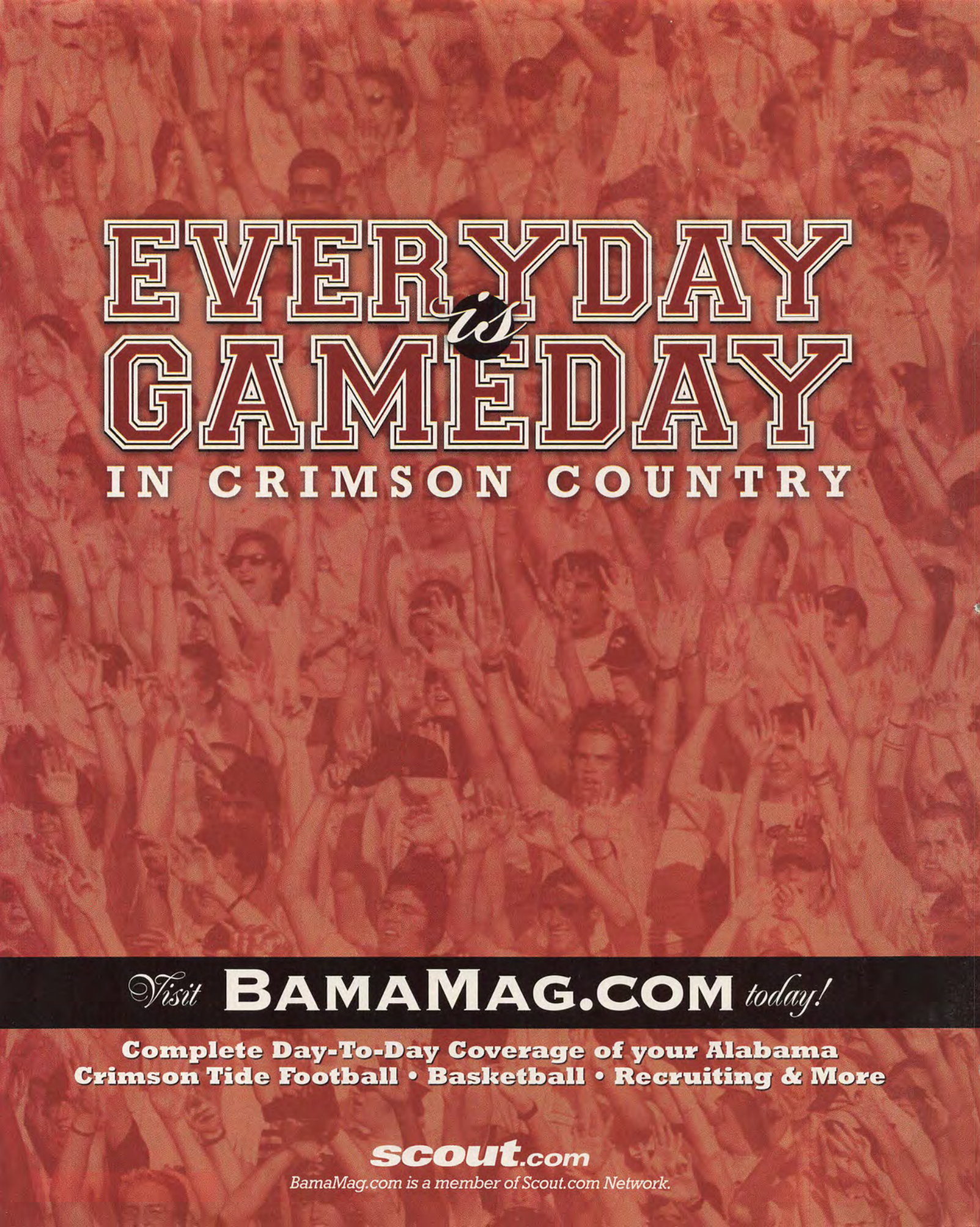
The Tide's senior leaders Antoine Caldwell (59) and Rashad Johnson (49) look to go out on top

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Bowl Talk
Recruiting
Basketball

0 74470 28555 7 01>

scout.com


EVERYDAY is GAMEDAY
IN CRIMSON COUNTRY
Visit BAMAMAG.COM today!
Complete Day-To-Day Coverage of your Alabama
Crimson Tide Football • Basketball • Recruiting & More
scout.com
BamaMag.com is a member of Scout.com Network.

Think Win.

What's Your Company's Game Plan?

Don't Just Play the Game. Play to Win.

Create a winning strategy by teaming up with Suttle-Straus! Our champion combination of in-house resources will keep your business performing at 110%. We focus our approach on your specific business needs so you focus on growing your fan base. Play by play, watch your graphic communications advance your business to the next level.

We Support Your Winning Team With:

- In-House Design Services
- Custom Printing and Finishing
- Digital Print; Variable Data Imaging
- Large Format Signage
- Full-Service Mailing Capabilities
- Distribution and Fulfillment

We train hard to keep your business competitive. Why?

Because we're your #1 fan!

think Suttle Straus

888.788.8537 • www.suttle-straus.com

'BAMA
INSIDE THE CRIMSON TIDE
JANUARY 2009 • ISSUE FIVE

Features

7 **Saban Enjoys Bowls**
Tide coach recognizes advantages
by Kirk McNair

10 **How The BCS Works**
National championship game is January 7
by 'BAMA Staff

11 **What A Tradition**
Tide has bowl record like no other
by Kirk McNair

17 **Luther Davis 'Bought In'**
Defensive end feels Alabama a sweet home
by Gentry Estes

21 **Who Is Next Quarterback?**
Greg McElroy has been top back-up
by Kirk McNair

24 **The Rich Get Richer**
Nationall basketball recruiting story
by Dave Telep

28 **Step Right Up**
Hoops newcomers expected to contribute
by Cary L. Clark

31 **Take A Step Back**
Three-point shot is more challenging
by Cary L. Clark

34 **Title Team**
Men's cross country wins SEC
by 'BAMA Staff

35 **Prep Prospects**
Tradition counts big for Bama in recruiting
by Andrew Bone

40 **Where Are They Now?**
Football 'source of pride' for Ben McLeod
by Caine O'Rear IV

Departments

6 **Letter From Editor**
9 **College Football Bowl Schedule**
14 **Alabama's Bowl Results**
15 **Bowl-By-Bowl**
16 **All-Time Bowl Leaders**
39 **Football Hot List**
42 **'BAMA Scorecard**
46 **Winter Sports Schedules**

Cover photo of football captains Antoine Caldwell and Rashad Johnson by Kent Gidley

Buried in Credit Card Debt?

Over $10,000 in credit card bills?
Only making the minimum payments?

- We can get you out of debt in months instead of years
- We can save you thousands of dollars
- We can help you avoid bankruptcy

Not a high-priced consolidation loan or one of those consumer credit counseling programs

Call

CREDIT CARD RELIEF

for your FREE consultation

866-360-5151

Not available in all states

'BAMA
INSIDE THE CRIMSON TIDE

'BAMA,
INSIDE THE CRIMSON TIDE
MAGAZINE

Editor
Kirk McNair

Recruiting Reporter
Andrew Bone

Feature Reporters
Gentry Estes, Cary L. Clark, Peter Edmund, Andrew Varble II, Walter Bostock, Arnold P. Steadham, Becky Hopf, Scott Latta, Lindsay Laurent

Photos
Kent Gidley, Barry Fikes, Benjamin Cohen, Butch Dill, Stuart McNair, Cory Johnson, Jessica Smith, Camelle Sizemore

Assistant To Editor
Vera Dowdle

scout.com
Scout Publishing, LLC.

Senior Director, Scout Publishing
Alan McDonald

Executive Director, Network Development & Marketing
Joel Cox

Director Of Scouting
Scott Kennedy

Advertising & Sponsorships
Eddie Pauline

Ad Traffic Manager
Mike Dempsey

Recruiting Editor
Dave Telep

Photography
Getty Images

Creative Director
Jay Torrell

Production Manager
Shannon Coffey

Graphic Designer
Garth French

Subscriptions:
Order online at bamamag.com (reduced online rate $39.95) or call 888-979-0979.

Customer Service:
Call 888-979-0979.

To Advertise In 'Bama, Inside The Crimson Tide:
Contact Dwight Johnson at Dwight@Scout.com OR Mitch Green at 1-800-239-9090.

Letter from the Editor

Dear Fellow Crimson Tide Fans,

The first Alabama bowl game I attended was historic and dramatic. It was the Orange Bowl against Nebraska at the end of the 1965 season. The year before I had watched on television as Alabama, which had won the national championship, lost to Texas, Joe Namath's quarterback sneak for victory ruled to be inches short of the goalline. In 1965 the Associated Press decided to make the bowl games a part of the national championship picture. That turned out to be great for Alabama and great for bowl games.

The Big Four in those days were the Rose, Sugar, Orange and Cotton. During the afternoon, number one Michigan State lost to UCLA in the Rose Bowl and number two Arkansas lost to LSU in the Cotton Bowl. It was a dream come true for the Orange Bowl. Nebraska, number three, and Alabama, number four, were the top-ranked remaining teams, and it was billed throughout the evening as the national championship game.

Alabama, which had suffered a loss to Georgia in the opening game and a tie at the hands of Tennessee, romped over Nebraska, 39-28, in a game that wasn't as close as the final score. Alabama won the national championship.

I have spent New Year's Eve in a lot of different cities following Alabama to bowl games. In addition to Miami, the New Year has been celebrated in New Orleans, Dallas, Tampa, Orlando, Jacksonville, Houston and Nashville. And I've been to other cities for bowl games that ended before the New Year.

We welcomed the New Millennium in Miami, preparing for Mike DuBose's Southeastern Conference champions to meet Michigan in the 2000 Orange Bowl. Clyde Bolton, since retired from the Birmingham News, joined my wife, Lynne, and my sister and her husband, Linda and Benjamin Cohen, in our hotel room. We had a few sips of champagne, but the main treat was M&M candies. Get it. MM. Roman numerals for 2000. Benjamin had programmed "Auld Lang Zyne" into his cell phone to complete the traditional celebration.

Following the Sugar Bowl win over Arkansas to complete an undefeated 1979 season and the national title, our small group went to a late dinner at a small New Orleans restaurant. It was more than a little surprise when Coach Paul Bryant and some of his friends from Tuscaloosa came into the restaurant a few minutes after we did. I told him we were probably the only Alabama people not out celebrating in the French Quarter.

For years I have considered a bowl game a reward for the players. Sometimes it's more than that, as in that end to the 1965 season and the national championship trophy that came with it. Alabama won three more national titles in bowl games—1978 against Penn State, 1979 against Arkansas and 1992 against Miami—all in New Orleans. It also lost one in New Orleans at the end of the 1973 season. United Press International was still basing its championship on regular season play, and Alabama got that trophy, but Notre Dame took most of the hardware with its 24-23 win.

When Alabama goes bowling, thousands of Crimson Tide fans follow. One thing I've noticed over the years is that Tide fans seem to appreciate the bowl experience more than followers of other teams. Maybe it's because Bama fans have more experience.

With Nick Saban at the helm, there's reason to believe that Alabama will be in many bowl games; indeed, many very important bowl games. ■

Sincerely,
Kirk McNair

Vol. 31, Issue 4 (ISSN 0195-0975 USPS 489-470) January, 2009
'BAMA, INSIDE THE CRIMSON TIDE magazine is published monthly, 10 times a year (September-June) by Scout Publishing, LLC 2003 Western Ave, Suite 700, Seattle, WA 98121. Basic subscription rate is $44.95. Single copy price is $4.95. **SUBSCRIBERS**: If the post office alerts us that your magazine is undeliverable, we have no further obligations unless we receive a corrected address. **POSTMASTER**: Please send all change of address forms to: **'Bama, Inside the Crimson Tide** 1916 Pike Place, Suite 12-250, Seattle, WA 98101-1097. Periodicals postage paid at Seattle, WA and additional mailing offices. Please allow three weeks for change of address. Reproduction or use, in whole or in part, of editorial or graphic content in any manner is strictly prohibited without the prior express written permission of Scout Publishing. All letters to 'BAMA magazine will be treated as intended for publication and are subject to 'BAMA magazine's unrestricted right to edit. Publisher is not responsible for any unsolicited art, photographs or manuscripts. 'BAMA magazine is an independent source of news and features relating to Alabama athletic programs. Scout Publishing, 'BAMA magazine and their officers, directors and stockholders are not authorized, sponsored or sanctioned by any university, athletic conference, or athletic governing body or any of their agencies. © 2008 Scout Publishing, LLC and **'BAMA, INSIDE THE CRIMSON TIDE** magazine. All rights reserved.

Saban Enjoys Bowls

Tide coach recognizes advantages

There's a reason they call it "bowl season." All college football bowl games are not created equal, but they are all special in one way or another. And because bowl games come weeks—perhaps more than a month—after regular season play has ended, there are special circumstances involved in preparation.

Bowls have been special at Alabama for decades. It is astounding that in days when the only bowl game that mattered was the Rose Bowl, that in 21 years—before the Rose Bowl closed its doors to Southern teams—Alabama made six appearances in the Granddaddy of Bowls. Alabama's bowl tradition is chronicled in these pages.

Alabama Coach Nick Saban recognizes the importance of bowl games.

It's not any one thing that makes a bowl game important," he said. "First and foremost, it is a reward for the players. It's an opportunity for them to play another game. It's also an opportunity for them to have fun, and do some things that can be a positive experience for them."

Football takes a lot of time at the level Alabama plays. Coaches and staff arrive for work early and stay late, and weekends are just two more work days.

Saban said, "It's a good thing for the families of the coaches and the players. They have an opportunity to get reinforcement for positive effort they make. This profession is not very family-friendly, at least not during football season. Bowl games can be a positive experience for families."

Saban also sees the advantage of bowl participation for the larger family.

He talks about "the entire football family, which includes our fans. There may be tough times for some of them, a tough life, adversity to overcome. It is heartening if they can relate to something positive, and a bowl game for their team is certainly an opportunity for a lot of people to do that."

Saban also sees long term and short term advantages for a football team involved in a bowl game.

"It's great exposure for the program from a recruiting standpoint," he said. "That goes back to the rewards and benefits for the players, and the players that you recruit with the opportunity to go to bowl games."

As Alabama prepares for a bowl game, and then plays in a bowl game, it will dominate newspaper sports sections and radio and television broadcasts in the state, and be a part of sports news throughout the nation. Prospects are sports fans and notice the teams that are receiving that attention.

It's not unusual for prospects, whose prep seasons have been

completed as Alabama has bowl practice, to show up to get an up-close view of Bama coaches and players working together.

And as has been frequently documented, prospects consider bowl tradition as one of the considerations in team selection.

When Alabama was preparing for its season-opening game against Clemson, Saban talked about spending too much time on preparation for one game. For one thing, the extra time should not be necessary. Alabama spends time in the spring and time in fall camp working on things that might be seen during the course of a year. That means players have been exposed to just about anything any team would do. Too much time spent on one team, Saban said, can make the team stale.

He has also pointed out this theory in weeks when Alabama had an open date before a game. The same theory applies to bowl preparation.

Even when there is opportunity for extra preparation time, Saban wants to spend no more than a day or two beyond the normal period on one opponent. In the course of a season, players are given Sunday off and begin preparation for the next Saturday game on a Monday. Friday is a walk-through, so four days are spent on preparation (with a little of that time used to correct past game mistakes). When there is extra time, perhaps two days are added to the preparation.

Still, there is additional practice time, opportunities not available to teams not playing in bowl games.

Saban said, "There's a developmental advantage for young players, 12 or 14 practices where they have an opportunity to get better. It's a little bit removed from the season—kind of a relearning experience for young players, which helps them in their development."

In the grand scope, a game like Alabama vs. Colorado in the Independence Bowl last year, might seem to be of little benefit. But it becomes a part of overall tradition and has the advantages of fun and preparation.

BCS bowl games (Sugar, Rose, Orange and Fiesta, and most notably the BCS Chamnpionship Game) carry more prestige.

Saban said, "It's always been a little bit of a goal of mine to try for that New Year's Day Bowl Game. Exposure is very positive. The national championship and then BCS bowls would be tops, but all New Year's Day. And there are a lot of other good ones, too."

He pointed out that when he was at LSU, "we went to the Peach Bowl our first year, then four straight years we had two BCS and two New Year's Day bowls."

Saban said, "I've had wonderful bowl game experiences from each and every one of them."

Prior to Alabama's participation in this year's SEC Championship Game and probable BCS game, Saban said, "The three games I've been involved in post-season that mean the most would be the championship games, the national championship game and the two SEC Championship games.

"It's because of the competitive venue itself, and everything you had to do to get there. Those are the ones I remember the most."

At the end of 2003, Saban's LSU team defeated Oklahoma for the national championship. Saban said in preparation for that game, he told his players "not to worry about winning the national title, but rather to focus on dominating the player in front of him and that it would be the best opposing player he faced.

"That's what competitors have to learn how to do," he said. "That's always a challenge, to get your players to understand that concept of playing to your capacity, focusing on all the things it takes for you and the team to play to that capacity as a competitor...not as a fan, but as a competitor. It's the most important thing. We live in a result-oriented world, and sometimes people lose sight of that; players, especially, lose sight of that."

Saban is on record as advocating a change in the current BCS plan for the national championship.

He said, "I've been an advocate of the plus-one system since 1997 when Michigan and Nebraska had a situation where they couldn't decide the national championship. (Michigan beat Washington State in the Rose Bowl for one national championship and Nebraska beat Tennessee in the Orange bowl for another.) I feel that having only two teams sort of takes a lot of teams out of it.

"In most situations where you've had issues, they would have been resolved with a plus-one. It usually involves three teams--maybe four—and I think that would have resolved it.

"This season the national championship game is on January 8, one week after the bowl games. With the plus-one, you play one through four in the bowl games, then two teams play one more game. It wouldn't cause any problems in terms of school.

"The SEC proposed this and didn't get much support.

"This is not to say that you still wouldn't have any issues. The NCAA Basketball Tournament chooses 65 teams and there's some discussion about teams being left out. Because you pick four, there's going to be debate on the fifth team that didn't get in. That's always going to be there, but with four teams I think legitimately you would have a better chance of a true national championship game." ■

Nick Saban with last year's Independence Bowl trophy

University of Alabama

Nick Saban In Bowls

Year	School (Record)	Bowl	Result
1991	Michigan State (6-5-1)	Independence	LSU 45, MSU 26
1996	Michigan State (6-6)	Sun	Stanford 38, MSU 0
1997	Michigan State (7-5)	Aloha	Washington 51, MSU 23
2000	LSU (6-4)	Peach	LSU 28, Georgia Tech 14
2001	LSU (10-3)	Sugar	LSU 47, Illinois 34
2002	LSU (8-5)	Cotton	Texas 35, LSU 20
2003	LSU (13-1)	BCS	LSU 21, Oklahoma 14*
2004	LSU (9-3)	Citrus	Iowa 30, LSU 25
2007	Alabama (7-6)	Independence	UA 30, Colorado 24

*National Championship

2008-09 College Football Bowl Schedule

(Dates and times are tentative and subject to change)

BOWL	DATE/TIME (CT)	SITE	MATCHUP	TV
Congressional	Dec. 20/10 a.m.	Washington, D.C.	Army/Navy/AtLarge vs. ACC	ESPN
New Mexico	Dec. 20/1:30	Albuquerque	Mountain West vs. WAC	ESPN
St. Petersburg	Dec. 20/5:30	St. Petersburg	Big East vs. C-USA	ESPN2
Las Vegas	Dec. 20/7:00	Las Vegas	Mountain West vs. Pac-10	ESPN
New Orleans	Dec. 21/7:00	New Orleans	Sun Belt vs. C-USA	ESPN
Poinsettia	Dec. 23/7:00	San Diego	Mountain West vs. Pac-10	ESPN
Hawaii	Dec. 24/7	Honolulu	WAC vs. Pac-10	ESPN
Motor City	Dec. 26/6:30	Detroit	Big 10 vs. MAC	ESPN
Meineke Car Care	Dec. 27/Noon	Charlotte, N.C.	ACC vs. Big East	ESPN
Champs Sports	Dec. 27/3:30	Orlando	ACC vs. Big Ten	ESPN
Emerald	Dec. 27/7:00	San Francisco	ACC vs. Pac-10	ESPN
*Independence	Dec. 28/7:00	Shreveport	SEC vs. Big 12	ESPN
*Papajohns.com	Dec. 29/2:00	Birmingham	SEC vs. Big East	ESPN
Alamo	Dec. 29/7:00	San Antonio	Big Ten vs. Big 12	ESPN
Humanitarian	Dec. 30/3:30	Bloise	ACC vs. WAC	ESPN
Holiday	Dec. 30/7:00	San Diego	Big 12 vs. Pac-10	ESPN
Texas	Dec. 30/7:00	Houston	Big 12 vs. C-USA	NFL
Armed Forces	Dec. 31/11 a.m.	Fort Worth	Mountain West vs. C-USA	ESPN
Sun	Dec. 31/1:00	El Paso	Pac-10 vs. Big East/Big 12/Notre Dame	CBS
*Music City	Dec. 31/2:30	Nashville	SEC vs. ACC	ESPN
Insight	Dec. 31/5:00	Tempe	Big Ten vs. Big 12	NFL
*Chick-fil-A	Dec. 31/6:30	Atlanta	SEC vs. ACC	ESPN
*Outback	Jan. 1/10 a.m.	Tampa	SEC vs. Big Ten	ESPN
Gator	Jan. 1/Noon	Jacksonville, Fla.	ACC vs. Big East/Big 12/Notre Dame	CBS
*Capital One	Jan. 1/Noon	Orlando	SEC vs. Big Ten	ABC
Rose	Jan. 1/4:00	Pasadena	BCS vs. BCS	ABC
Orange	Jan. 1/7:00	Miami	BCS vs. BCS	Fox
*Cotton	Jan. 2/1:00	Dallas	SEC vs. Big 12	Fox
*Liberty	Jan. 2/4:00	Memphis	SEC vs. C-USA	ESPN
*Sugar	Jan. 2/7:00	New Orleans	SEC vs. BCS	Fox
International	Jan. 3/11 a.m.	Toronto	Big East vs. MAC	ESPN2
Fiesta	Jan. 5/7:00	Phoenix	BCS vs. BCS	Fox
GMAC	Jan. 6/7:00	Mobile	C-USA vs. MAC/WAC	ESPN
BCS Championship	Jan. 8/7:00	Miami	BCS 1 vs. BCS 2	Fox

*SEC affiliated bowl game

(When not having a conference champion participating in the BCS National Championship Game, the BCS will have the following conference champions as host teams: Sugar-SEC; Rose-Pac-10 and Big Ten; Fiesta-Big 12; Orange-ACC.)

How The BCS Works

National championship game is January 8

Once upon a time, or so it seemed to Alabama fans and also those who despise the Crimson Tide, the bowls were arranged on the second floor of Coleman Coliseum, where Alabama Head Football Coach Paul Bryant had his office.

Legendary Nebraska Coach Bob Devaney explained it. "In 1965, Coach Bryant called me and told me we ought to hook up in the Orange Bowl since it would be the last bowl game of the day," Devaney said. "He said he could take care of it. I agreed. We played that night for the national championship, and Alabama beat us, 39-28.

"The next year he called again and said that since the polls were going to be decided before the bowl games that we ought to go to New Orleans, just have a nice time in the Sugar Bowl, and he could arrange it. I said that sounded good. Alabama beat us 34-7.

"A couple of years later we were both down a little. He called and said he could arrange for the Liberty Bowl to have another Alabama-Nebraska match-up. I told him I'd get back to him. I picked up the phone and called the Sun Bowl and accepted their offer to play Georgia. We won 45-6."

Alabama's domination of college football through the 1960s and 1970s certainly made Bryant a key player in bowl arrangements. But there were things that even he couldn't get past, such as the Pac-10 and Big Ten champions being in the closed shop Rose Bowl each year. Later other tie-ups complicated the process of having true national championship games in a bowl game.

At one time after the Sugar Bowl became affiliated with the Southeastern Conference, there was a rule that if two teams tied for the league championship, the team that had represented the SEC most recently would be by-passed for the Sugar Bowl berth. In 1978 Penn State (not yet a member of the Big Ten) was number one and wanted to play the highest ranked team in a major bowl. Alabama was number two, but both Alabama and Georgia were 5-0 with one league game to play. Both were playing Auburn. Bama fans had to pull for Auburn. As it turned out, Georgia and Auburn tied, and then Alabama beat Auburn to win the conference and go to New Orleans. The 14-7 Alabama win gave the Tide the national title.

Now the national championship is an arranged affair, the Bowl Championship Series Game. The BCS has been around for awhile and previously the national championship game was rotated among the current Big Four bowl games–Rose, Sugar, Orange and Fiesta (which bought the Cotton Bowl's former spot). For the past two years a separate game at the site of one of the BCS games has pitted number one against number two in the BCS Championship Game. This year the game is in Miami on January 8.

Prior to that will be BCS games in the Big Four bowl games. It is possible for one conference to have more than one team in BCS competition, particularly if a conference team reaches the BCS Championship Game.

When not having a conference champion participating in the BCS National Championship Game, the BCS will have the following conference champions as host teams: Sugar-SEC; Rose-Pac-10 and Big Ten; Fiesta-Big 12; Orange-ACC.)

Conferences with automatic berths are the Atlantic Coast, Big East, Big Ten, Big 12, Pac-10, and SEC. An independent or champion of one of several smaller conferences can get into a BCS bowl game if ranked in the top 12 in BCS rankings (which begin in October and continue through the completion of the conference championship games in early December).

Although in most years there is at least some controversy over the selection of the top two teams, the purpose of the BCS Championship Game is to match the top two teams in college football.

A few years ago the Associated Press decided that it did not want its rankings to be a part of the system. The AP has long been considered the most prestigious national college football poll.

The BCS rankings now come from a combination of the Coaches Poll, the Harris Interactive Poll, and by a combination of six computer rankings–Anderson & Hester, Richard Billingsley, Colley Matrix, Kenneth Massey, Jeff Sagarin and Peter Wolf. ■

What A Tradition

Tide has bowl record like no other

Just when you think Alabama couldn't possibly have any more football tradition, the Crimson Tide gets a homecoming win over Arkansas State. So what's the big deal about that? It goes back to the end of the 2007 season and Alabama's Independence Bowl victory over Colorado.

Alabama followed that (months later) with nine consecutive victories to start th2 2008 season, giving Alabama a run of 10 straight victories.

It marked the 21st time in Alabama football history the Crimson Tide has had a winning streak reach at least 10 games. That is an NCAA record for winning streaks of 10 or more games. The last time Bama won 10 in a row was over the 1993-94 seasons when Alabama reached a streak of 12 straight wins. Michigan and Nebraska each have had 16 such streaks.

Although this streak started with a bowl game, it is not a bowl record. But Alabama has plenty of those. And if a team has a winning streak of 10 or more games, it's almost certain one or two bowl appearances will be involved.

As bowl season approaches, Alabama is always in the limelight. During the season an out-of-town reporter asked Tide offensive lineman Mike Johnson if Alabama's tradition was something the players were aware of. Johnson said he hadn't known much about it growing up in Florida "except Bear Bryant and all the national championships," but when he was on his official recruiting visit he went to the Bryant Museum and became aware of just how grand Bama football has been. "That turned into a big recruiting point," he said.

"It's pretty cool," Johnson said. "It's nice to be a part of the tradition here."

The Crimson Tide tradition is particularly notable in bowl season. If a national championship is on the line, all the more attention settles on Bama.

Alabama has now played in 55 bowl games, eight more than runner-up teams Texas and Tennessee.

Bama is first in bowl victories, too, with 31, one ahead of Southern Cal.

The Crimson Tide has played in an incredible 33 traditional Big Four–Rose, Sugar, Orange and Cotton–bowl games. (Bama's one appearance in the Fiesta was when it was still a so-called minor bowl.)

Alabama is one of a handful of schools to have played in all four major bowl games and one of a smaller number to win all four. The Tide is the only team with more than one victory in each of the four majors.

Alabama's bowl history dates from January 1, 1926, when Wallace Wade took the Crimson Tide to Pasadena, where Bama upset Washington, 20-19. It was a victory of astounding proportions, this team from lightly regarded Dixie winning the equivalent of the national championship.

Wade became the first of three eventual Hall of Fame coaches from Alabama to take teams to bowl games. Frank Thomas would also be a Rose Bowl regular, including coaching Alabama in the final Rose Bowl open to teams other than those of what would become the Pac-10 and the Big Ten. Bama's 34-14 embarrassment of Southern Cal was the final straw for the Rose Bowl, which closed its doors to outsiders. Bama had finished with a 4-1-1 record in the 21 years it was eligible for the Granddaddy of Bowl Games.

The Rose Bowl was one of three bowls in which the Crimson Tide won national championships. Alabama's 12 national titles include those won via victories in the Rose Bowl following the 1925, 1926, 1930 and 1934 seasons. Following the 1941 team, Bama won an improbable Cotton Bowl game against Texas A&M, and even more improbable was that 9-2 Crimson Tide team being selected a national champion. That Alabama team had lost regular season games to Vanderbilt and Mississippi State.

More impressive bowl wins that came at the end of seasons in which bowl games were part of the national championship formula included the 1965 Alabama team defeating Nebraska, 39-28, to take the championship. Ironically, the Associated Press decided in 1965 to wait until after bowl games before its final poll. Previously the championship was awarded based on regular season play only, but in 1964 the Tide had gone undefeated in regular season play to win

The famed Goal Line Stand against Penn State in the Sugar Bowl won the 1978 title for Tide

Bryant Museum

the championship, then lost in the Orange Bowl to Texas.

The AP's decision enabled Bama, ranked fourth going into New Year's Day, to win the championship with the win over Nebraska because number one Michigan State lost in the Rose Bowl and number two Arkansas lost in the Cotton Bowl. That made number three Nebraska vs. number four Alabama the game for the title.

While that AP flip-flop helped Alabama, the next year the wire service reversed field and it may have cost the Tide a third straight national championship. Notre Dame and Michigan State were ranked first and second. They played to an infamous 10-10 tie, a game in which Notre Dame ran out the clock knowing the poll voters would favor the Irish. In those days Notre Dame was not going to bowl games and Michigan State was barred by a Big Ten rule from returning to the Rose Bowl. That meant neither would be bowling. The AP reverted to a pre-bowl vote. Alabama was the nation's only undefeated team, but when the Tide buried Nebraska, 34-7, in the Sugar Bowl, there was no title vote to follow.

Alabama did win national championships with Sugar Bowl victories over Penn State following the 1978 season, over Arkansas following the 1979 season, and over Miami following the 1992 season.

Alabama's first bowl victory was also Alabama's first 10-0 season.

The Crimson Tide has 29 10-win seasons, two fewer than national leader Oklahoma.

Often that 10th victory has come in a bowl game. Alabama's other seasons with 10 wins with the final triumph coming in a bowl game include 1930, with the 10th victory a 24-0 win over Washington in the Rose Bowl; 1934, a 29-13 Rose Bowl win over Stanford; 1945, the 34-14 romp over Southern Cal in the Rose Bowl; 1952, Alabama's record-breaking 61-6 rout of Syracuse in the Orange Bowl; 1961, Alabama defeating Oklahoma, 17-0, with President John Kennedy among those in the Orange Bowl crowd; 1986, Alabama 28, Washington 7 in the Sun Bowl; 1996, Gene Stallings' final game as Bama head coach and Alabama downing Michigan, 17-14, in the Outback Bowl; and 2005, Alabama 13, Texas Tech 10 in the Cotton Bowl.

Stallings has the distinction of having coached Alabama to five bowl victories (in six opportunities) and also coached against Alabama and won, his Texas A&M team defeating Paul Bryant's Bama, 20-16, in the 1968 Cotton Bowl.

Usually, the memorable bowl games are the victories. But the loss to Texas A&M and Alabama's first bowl game under Bryant, the 1959 Liberty Bowl, are memorable. And Alabama vs. Notre Dame in the Sugar Bowl at the completion of the 1973 season ranks among college football's most dramatic and historic events.

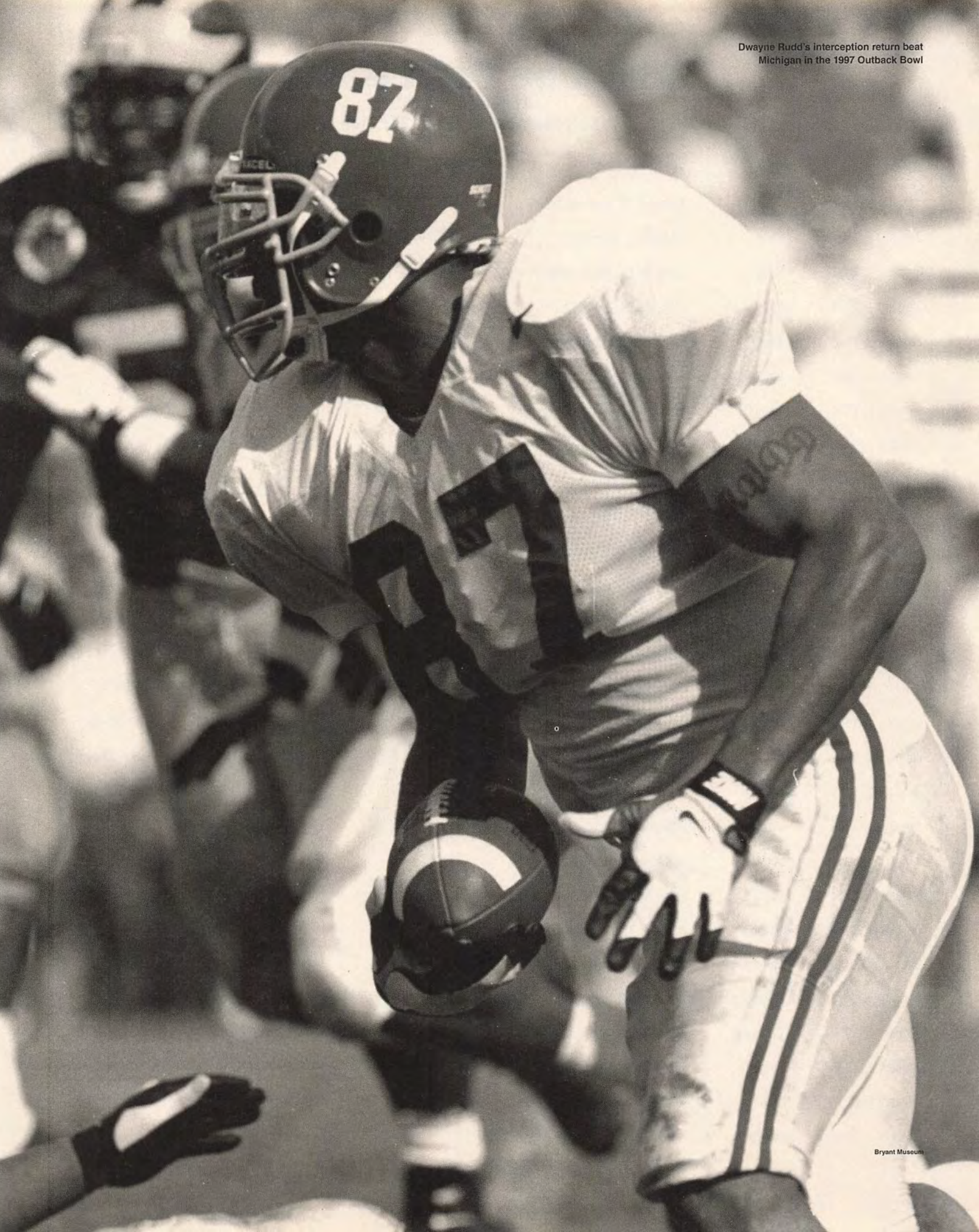
Even a tie—Alabama and Oklahoma finishing 24-24 in the AstroBluebonnet Bowl at the end of the 1970 season could be said to be of great importance. Oklahoma had switched to the wishbone offense. On the airplane ride from Houston to Tuscaloosa, Bryant began sketching out the wishbone on a legal pad. Maybe that had something to do with Bama's switch to the wishbone at the beginning of the 1971 season, and the start of another dominant decade of Alabama football.

Bryant coached Alabama to 24 consecutive bowl games, missing out only in his first season back at Bama in 1958. He is one of 11 men to serve as Bama head coach in a bowl game. Bryant is one of four men who both played in bowl games for Alabama and served as head coach in bowl games for the Crimson Tide. Ray Perkins, Mike DuBose and Mike Shula were others who both played and head coached Bama bowl games. DuBose is the only man to play and head coach in the same bowl game. He was a player in the 1975 Orange Bowl and coach in the 2000 Orange.

Alabama has played in 16 different bowl games and played in bowl games in 10 different states–Arizona, California, Florida, Hawaii, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Texas. The Tide has played in 19 different stadiums. In the 1975 Sugar Bowl, Alabama defeated Penn State, 13-6, the first Sugar Bowl in the Louisiana Superdome and the first Sugar Bowl in which the Southeastern Conference champion was the tie-in host team.

Alabama players have garnered 42 "Most Valuable Player" awards in bowl games and 19 Crimson Tide players and coaches have been selected to various all-time bowl teams.

Alabama has played 33 different teams in bowl games. ■



Dwayne Rudd's interception return beat Michigan in the 1997 Outback Bowl

Bryant Museum

Alabama Bowl Results

Appearances: 55
Record: Won 31, Lost 21, Tied 3

Date	Bowl	Result
January 1, 1926	Rose	Alabama 20, Washington 19
January 1, 1927	Rose	Alabama 7, Stanford 7
January 1, 1931	Rose	Alabama 24, Washington State 0
January 1, 1935	Rose	Alabama 29, Stanford 13
January 1, 1938	Rose	California 13, Alabama 0
January 1, 1942	Cotton	Alabama 29, Texas A&M 21
January 1, 1943	Orange	Alabama 37, Boston College 21
January 1, 1945	Sugar	Duke 29, Alabama 26
January 1, 1946	Rose	Alabama 34, Southern Cal 14
January 1, 1948	Sugar	Texas 27, Alabama 7
January 1, 1953	Orange	Alabama 61, Syracuse 6
January 1, 1954	Cotton	Rice 28, Alabama 6
December 19, 1959	Liberty	Penn State 7, Alabama 0
December 17, 1960	Bluebonnet	Alabama 3, Texas 3
January 1, 1962	Sugar	Alabama 10, Arkansas 3
January 1, 1963	Orange	Alabama 17, Oklahoma 0
January 1, 1964	Sugar	Alabama 12, Ole Miss 7
January 1, 1965	Orange	Texas 21, Alabama 17
January 1, 1966	Orange	Alabama 39, Nebraska 28
January 2, 1967	Sugar	Alabama 34, Nebraska 7
January 1, 1968	Cotton	Texas A&M 20, Alabama 16
December 28, 1968	Gator	Missouri 35, Alabama 10
December 13, 1969	Liberty	Colorado 47, Alabama 33
December 31, 1970	Bluebonnet	Alabama 24, Oklahoma 24
January 1, 1972	Orange	Nebraska 38, Alabama 6
January 1, 1973	Cotton	Texas 17, Alabama 13
December 31, 1973	Sugar	Notre Dame 24, Alabama 23
January 1, 1975	Orange	Notre Dame 13, Alabama 11
December 31, 1975	Sugar	Alabama 13, Penn State 6
December 20, 1976	Liberty	Alabama 36, UCLA 6
January 2, 1978	Sugar	Alabama 35, Ohio State 6
January 1, 1979	Sugar	Alabama 14, Penn State 7
January 1, 1980	Sugar	Alabama 24, Arkansas 9
January 1, 1981	Cotton	Alabama 30, Baylor 2
January 1, 1982	Cotton	Texas 14, Alabama 12
December 29, 1982	Liberty	Alabama 21, Illinois 15
December 24, 1983	Sun	Alabama 28, SMU 7
December 28, 1985	Aloha	Alabama 24, Southern Cal 3
December 25, 1986	Sun	Alabama 28, Washington 6
January 2, 1988	Hall of Fame	Michigan 28, Alabama 24
December 24, 1988	Sun	Alabama 29, Army 28
January 1, 1990	Sugar	Miami 33, Alabama 25
January 1, 1991	Fiesta	Louisville 34, Alabama 7
December 28, 1991	Blockbuster	Alabama 30, Colorado 25
January 1, 1993	Sugar	Alabama 34, Miami 13
December 31, 1993	Gator	Alabama 24, North Carolina 10
January 2, 1995	Citrus	Alabama 24, Ohio State 17
January 1, 1997	Outback	Alabama 17, Michigan 14
December 29, 1998	Music City	Virginia Tech 38, Alabama 7
January 1, 2000	Orange	Michigan 35, Alabama 34 (OT)
December 27, 2001	Independence	Alabama 14, Iowa State 13
December 31 , 2004	Music City	Minnesota 20, Alabama 16
January 2, 2006	Cotton	Alabama 13, Texas Tech 10
December 28, 2006	Independence	Oklahoma State 34, Alabama 31
December 30, 2007	Independence	Alabama 30, Colorado 24

Bowl By Bowl

Rose Bowl
Pasadena, California
Record: Won 4, Lost 1, Tied 1

Alabama 20, Washington 19
Alabama 7, Stanford 7
Alabama 24, Washington State 0
Alabama 29, Stanford 13
California 13, Alabama 0
Alabama 34, Southern Cal 14

Outstanding Player Awards
Back Johnny Mack Brown
Tackle Fred Pickhard
Back John "Monk" Campbell
Back Millard "Dixie" Howell
Back Harry Gilmer

Sugar Bowl
New Orleans, Louisiana
Record: Won 8, Lost 4

Duke 29, Alabama 26
Texas 27, Alabama 7
Alabama 10, Arkansas 3
Alabama 12, Ole Miss 7
Alabama 34, Nebraska 7
Notre Dame 24, Alabama 23
Alabama 13, Penn State 6
Alabama 35, Ohio State 6
Alabama 14, Penn State 7
Alabama 24, Arkansas 9
Miami 33, Alabama 25
Alabama 34, Miami 13

Outstanding Player Awards
Fullback Mike Fracchia
Placekicker Tim Davis
Quarterback Ken Stabler
Quarterback Richard Todd
Quarterback Jeff Rutledge
Linebacker Barry Krauss
Halfback Major Ogilvie
Tailback Derrick Lassic

Orange Bowl
Miami, Florida
Record: Won 4, Lost 4

Alabama 37, Boston College 21
Alabama 61, Syracuse 6
Alabama 17, Oklahoma 0
Texas 21, Alabama 17
Alabama 39, Nebraska 28
Nebraska 38, Alabama 6
Notre Dame 13, Alabama 11
Michigan 35, Alabama 34 (OT)

Outstanding Player Awards
Linebacker Lee Roy Jordan
Quarterback Joe Namath
Quarterback Steve Sloan
End Leroy Cook

Fiesta Bowl
Tempe, Arizona
Record: Won 0, Lost 1

Louisville 34, Alabama 7

Cotton Bowl
Dallas, Texas
Record: Won 3, Lost 4

Alabama 29, Texas A&M 21
Rice 28, Alabama 6
Texas A&M 20, Alabama 16
Texas 17, Alabama 13
Alabama 30, Baylor 2
Texas 14, Alabama 12
Alabama 13, Texas Tech 10

Outstanding Player Awards
End Holt Rast, Tackle Don Whitmire,
Halfback Jimmy Nelson
Halfback Major Ogilvie, Noseguard
Warren Lyles
Linebacker Robbie Jones
Quarterback Brodie Croyle,
Linebacker DeMeco Ryans

Gator Bowl
Jacksonville, Florida
Record: Won 1, Lost 1

Missouri 35, Alabama 10
Alabama 24, North Carolina 10

Outstanding Player Awards
Quarterback Brian Burgdorf

Blockerbuster Bowl
Fort Lauderdale, Florida
Record: Won 1, Lost 0

Alabama 30, Colorado 25

Outstanding Player Award
Receiver David Palmer

Liberty Bowl
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (1959)
Memphis, Tennessee
Record: Won 2, Lost 2

Penn State 7, Alabama 0
Colorado 47, Alabama 33
Alabama 36, UCLA 6
Alabama 21, Illinois 15

Outstanding Player Award
Linebacker Barry Krauss
Cornerback Jeremiah Castille

Bluebonnet Bowl
Houston, Texas
Record: Won 0, Lost 0, Tied 2

Alabama 3, Texas 3
Alabama 24, Oklahoma 24

Outstanding Player Award
1960
Linebacker Lee Roy Jordan
Linebacker Jeff Rouzie

Sun Bowl
El Paso, Texas
Record: Won 3, Lost 0

Alabama 28, SMU 7
Alabama 28, Washington 6
Alabama 29, Army 28

Outstanding Player Award
Quarterback Walter Lewis, Center
Wes Neighbors
Linebacker Cornelius Bennett
Quarterback David Smith,
Linebacker Derrick Thomas

Aloha Bowl
Honolulu, Hawaii
Record: Won 1, Lost 0

Alabama 24, Southern Cal 3

Outstanding Player Award
Linebacker Cornelius Bennett,
Tailback Gene Jelks

Citrus Bowl
Orlando, Florida
Record: Won 1, Lost 0

Alabama 24, Ohio State 17

Outstanding Player Award
Tailback Sherman Williams

Hall Of Fame Bowl
Tampa, Florida
Record: Won 0, Lost 1

Michigan 28, Alabama 24

Music City Bowl
Nashville, Tennessee
Record: Won 0, Lost 2

Virginia Tech 38, Alabama 7
Minnesota 20, Alabama 16

Outback Bowl
Tampa, Florida
Record: Won 1, Lost 0

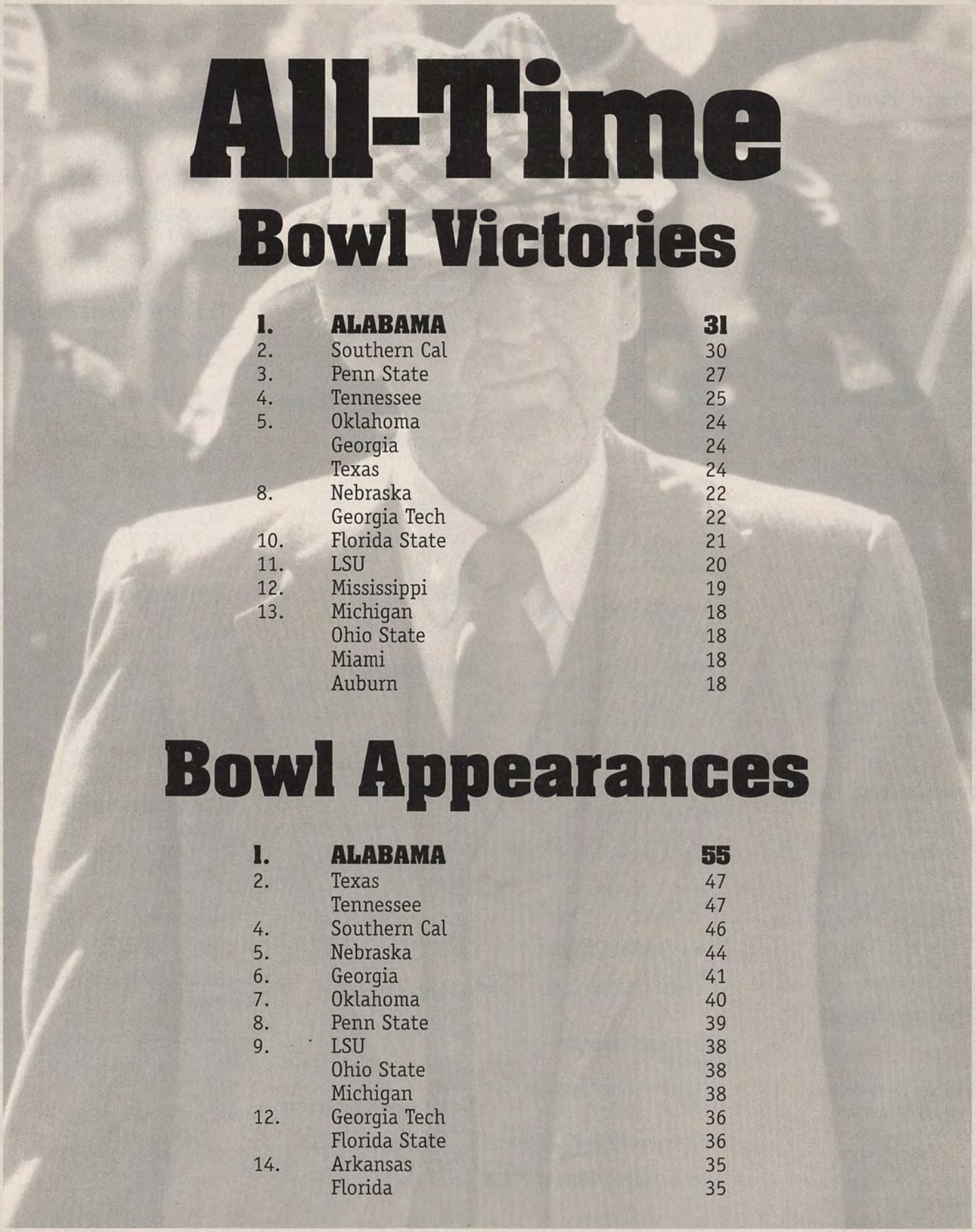
Alabama 17, Michigan 14

Outstanding Player Award
Linebacker Dwayne Rudd

Independence Bowl
Shreveport, Louisiana
Record: Won 1, Lost 1

Alabama 14, Iowa State 13
Oklahoma State 34, Alabama 31
Alabama 30, Colorado 24

Outstanding Player Award
Safety Waine Bacon
Quarterback John Parker Wilson



All-Time Bowl Victories

1.	**ALABAMA**	**31**
2.	Southern Cal	30
3.	Penn State	27
4.	Tennessee	25
5.	Oklahoma	24
	Georgia	24
	Texas	24
8.	Nebraska	22
	Georgia Tech	22
10.	Florida State	21
11.	LSU	20
12.	Mississippi	19
13.	Michigan	18
	Ohio State	18
	Miami	18
	Auburn	18

Bowl Appearances

1.	**ALABAMA**	**55**
2.	Texas	47
	Tennessee	47
4.	Southern Cal	46
5.	Nebraska	44
6.	Georgia	41
7.	Oklahoma	40
8.	Penn State	39
9.	LSU	38
	Ohio State	38
	Michigan	38
12.	Georgia Tech	36
	Florida State	36
14.	Arkansas	35
	Florida	35

Luther Davis 'Bought In'

Defensive end feels Alabama a sweet home

College football players aren't just a number on a jersey, a star ranking in recruiting, or the expectations and passion projected onto them by the public.

In the end, and it's too often forgotten, they are real people with real problems, concerns and stories they may not want to tell; young men facing very public lives not always of their own choosing.

Alabama sophomore defensive end Luther Davis falls into such a category.

Luther Davis earned playing time as a freshman

Stuart McNair

What we know is that Davis' first year in Tuscaloosa wasn't easy. It involved the desire to return home for a brief time amid a multitude of unclear factors. Some were tied to football, a big-time recruit struggling to shine right away. Some were not.

"It really wasn't the fact of just my not playing," Davis said. "It was frustrating learning the system and the new techniques and everything. I kind of put a lot of expectations on myself, and that's what made it more difficult for me."

Homesickness can be a normal struggle for a freshman college football player, particularly one from out of state who leaves and doesn't often get to return.

Only it was worse for Davis. The occasional trip home wasn't enough. At one point last spring, it got to be too much. Davis left school and Alabama's football team. The listed cause was "personal reasons," and Davis' future with the Crimson Tide was called into question after a true freshman season where he played sparingly.

"Last fall (2007), I had so much with school and football keeping me busy. I really didn't have time to just think about my family and friends back home," Davis said. "During the off-season, I had a lot more free time. I was going home some weekends. I kind of felt like I was just missing out on something. I kind of forgot my reason for coming here (to Alabama) and why I wanted to be here."

Davis missed the team's first two spring practices, and then, with no more warning than his abrupt departure, he was back. He impressed during the remainder or spring, even more in the off-season, and worked his way into a contributing role at defensive end for Alabama's 2008 team.

Nick Saban recruited Luther Davis from Louisiana

Stuart McNair

"Luther has done a really good job and has played with consistency," Alabama Coach Nick Saban said. "It's helped us be able to keep our players fresh throughout the game, and I think that's critical."

In a way, Davis is the ultimate example of a team "buying into" Saban's philosophy more in the year two than year one, and the results have shown.

"I've got the defense under me after a year of experience," Davis said. "I'm a little bit more comfortable. I've kind of changed to where I'm taking what Coach (Saban) says to me from a negative way to a positive way, listening to what he's saying instead of how he's saying it."

Said safety Rashad Johnson of Davis: "He's a guy we always knew had potential to come out and help us every week, and that's definitely what he's done. He came in and made some big stops for us up front."

Really, Davis' difficulties stretched back before he even arrived at Alabama. He was the first genuine big-time prospect to join up after Saban was hired from the Miami Dolphins in January 2007. Davis caused a stir in his hometown of West Monroe, Louisiana, by decommitting from LSU and then choosing Saban, an unpopular figure on the Bayou.

Davis admits at the time "I really didn't know much about Alabama football.

"It was probably the toughest decision I've ever made in my life and probably will make," Davis said. "Anything worse than that, I don't want to go through again. It was really tough for my family. We experienced a lot of hate mail, threats, pranks. It was a real tough time for my family and it still kind of goes on to my parents now. It was just something I had to pray about. I knew by making the decision to come here that I would have to go through that. There wasn't a time Coach Saban or Coach Davis (Alabama defensive line coach Bo Davis) wasn't with me."

The week of Alabama's trip to LSU this year heightened the bad memories for Davis. He said, "It was pretty emotional, just for my family experiencing things every day, just having the whole city and state turn their back on you, treating you all kinds of ways, calling you names, just because you didn't do what was best for them, but best for yourself. There were times when my father feared for his job, because a lot of people (at work), plus his boss, were LSU fans. It was really stressful for us, but we got through it. We still go through it at times, but it's gotten better."

Davis didn't hear much good in those days. He said, "They were calling us 'traitors' and things like that. They had a lot to say about Coach Saban, saying he wasn't going to be here very long and we were all stupid, and how disappointed they were because we followed him. It wasn't anything about that, I just always wanted to play for him, even if he was at LSU. If the situation, or opportunity would have presented itself, I still would have gone there (to LSU) just for him, not just for him coming here or him leaving and coming to the next stop."

Davis said he made the right decision "because I feel like their true colors came out once they said the things they said about me

Luther Davis is freshman defensive end

University of Alabama

SPORTS ★ CONCERTS ★ THEATRE

SECTION ANY TICKET | EVENT ANY EVENT | VENUE ANYWHERE

www.TicketSolutions.com

TICKET SOLUTIONS
PROVIDING UNFORGETTABLE ENTERTAINMENT EXPERIENCES

Order Tickets Online or Call Toll Free
800.477.5285

TICKET SOLUTIONS OFFERS:
★ Premium Seats
★ Sold-out Events
★ College Sports
★ Professional Sports
★ Major Concerts
★ Broadway/Off-Broadway
★ Vegas Theatre Events

SECTION ANY TICKET | EVENT ANY EVENT | VENUE ANYWHERE

www.TicketSolutions.com

after I switched my commitment, and were doing the things they were doing, felt how they felt. It just showed me that they never cared about what was best for me, they just cared about me doing what was best for them, what would make them happy."

As for LSU Coach Les Miles' reaction to Davis opting for Alabama, Davis said, "He was pretty upset. It went from him trying to talk to me to calling me a traitor and saying that I'm only doing this because 'the devil has come back to college football and is trying to create a big buzz.' It wasn't at all about that. The fact that he got mad that I even took the visit showed that I was just going to be another number on the (LSU) team, that I wasn't going to be as important as he made it out to be. Coach Miles, I still think he's a great coach. He's done a great job down there. Capturing a national championship can't be easy, especially in the SEC. I have no negative feelings toward him."

Why did Davis put himself through that?

"Coach Saban's main thing is he's going to make sure you're a successful person before you're a good football player or a great football player," Davis said. "I couldn't find any other coach in the country who wanted that for his players. There may be some that said it, but he really strives for it. I couldn't have gotten that back home at any other school, and I couldn't have gotten more support from my teammates.

"During the time I was off, I had guys checking up with me every day, calling me, spending time with me and just making it that much better. It's good to see that hasn't stopped. It's continued through now, and I think that's a big part of our success."

It's understandable why LSU and Alabama and just about every other major college football program was interested in Davis when he finished at West Monroe High School. He was a prep All-America, selected for the U.S. Army All-American Game. Scout ranked him a four-star performer. As a senior for Coach Don Shows, Davis had 88 tackles (22 for loss) with 13 sacks, forced eight fumbles and recovered four fumbles, blocked five field goal attempts, and had two interceptions. His team was 11-1.

In addition to LSU, Davis turned down scholarship offers from Florida, Oklahoma and Louisville to join the Crimson Tide.

When he selected Alabama, he told Scout's Andrew Bone he had picked the Crimson Tide because of Saban, "because of the kind of person he is. I believe in what he is trying to do at Alabama. He has the same goals he had when he went to LSU, and I want to be a part of that."

In the dark days following his 2007 freshman season, Davis said he considered transferring, perhaps to a school closer to home. But thoughts of Saban and teammates were enough to keep him close to the program.

"It was a thought," he said. "But every time I thought about it, I'd go home and I'd understand why I didn't want to be there."

The 2008 Alabama Football Media Guide shows a smiling portrait of the 6-foot-4, 275-pound defensive end as opposed to the frown he displayed in the spring edition. Davis is now content and happy he stayed.

It's a symbol of a young man growing into a program doing much the same.

"All in all, it just ended up being that Alabama is the best place for me," Davis said. "It's my home now, and it may be my home for the rest of my life." ■

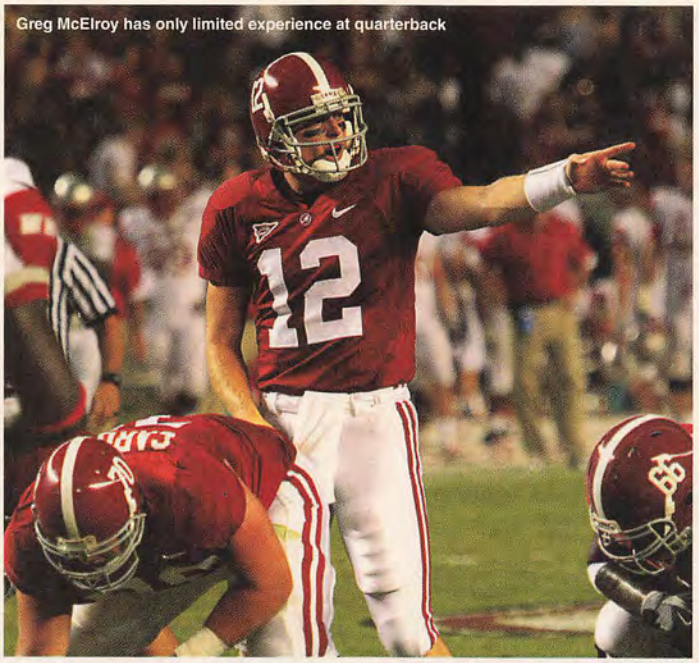
Who Is Next Quarterback?

McElroy was Wilson's back-up in 2008

One measure of a team having a good football season is its fans not clamoring to see the back-up quarterback, a player often considered the team's most popular. In 2008, Alabama followers were quite satisfied with John Parker Wilson, who set every meaningful single season and career Crimson Tide passing record.There have been some pretty good quarterbacks at Alabama over the years, so setting even one record is quite an accomplishment.

That's the good news.

The bad news is that Wilson is completing his senior season. More bad news: the successor to Wilson who will be the 2009 quarterback had almost no meaningful experience—perhaps no college experience whatsoever--as the 2008 season was winding down.



Greg McElroy has only limited experience at quarterback

Stuart McNair

The possibilities are:

- Greg McElroy, an upcoming junior who was the little-used back-up in 2007 and 2008.
- Walk-on Thomas Darrah, an upcoming sophomore who looked good in the 2008 Alabama spring game.
- Star Jackson, a true freshman this season who was redshirted
- A.J. McCarron, a senior at St. Paul's in Mobile who has committed to sign with Alabama
- Morgan Ogilvie, a walk-on true freshman in 2008
- Someone else

The smart money is on Greg McElroy, who will be a third year junior in 2009.

Although he doesn't play the back-up quarterback very often, Alabama Coach Nick Saban has said on several occasions over the past two years he was "confident" McElroy could step in.

McElroy is a 6-2, 220-pound third year man for the Crimson Tide. Although he has never demonstrated a particularly strong arm, he has shown good judgment. Additionally, he has gotten more work with the first unit (and with Quarterbacks Coach and Offensive Coordinator Jim McElwain) than any other 2009 quarterback candidate.

"I prepare each day like I'm preparing to be the quarterback that week, like I'm going to be the guy," McElroy said. But it doesn't happen. Instead, what McElroy does is signal in plays to Wilson. And he considers that to be valuable, too.

"I have enjoyed my job as the man who signals in the play," McElroy said. "You get an understanding something like a coach in that you are in on the thought process and watching the game from the sidelines. You get a different point of view. I had never thought about being a coach, but I think now I may want to be."

McElroy said he has gotten about 25 per cent of the snaps with the offense over the past two years. He hasn't been on the scout team since his true freshman year in 2006. "I think that will help me in the future," McElroy said.

He is reluctant to discuss the future, though.

"I can't get up in next year," he said. "My focus each week is on the game that week.

"It doesn't bother me that I haven't played a lot. We're having a great season and that's what's important, being part of a good football team.

"John Parker has always been a great player. This year he understands his role. He's done a masterful job."

University of Alabama

University of Alabama

University of Alabama

Like Wilson, McElroy has had three quarterbacks coaches--Dave Rader, who was involved with recruiting him from famed Carroll High School in Southlake, Texas; Major Applewhite; and McElwain.

"I think all of them had a positive effect," McElroy said. "I like Coach Mac a lot. He's like icing on the cake.

"After the season I'll spend every second I can with him."

McElroy noted, "I've been a back-up before."

No kidding. He was a sophomore when Chase Daniel, who would be national high school player of the year, was a junior. That meant two years as a back-up.

But when he got his chance, he delivered. He racked up 4,687 yards and 56 touchdowns (a Texas prep record) and only nine interceptions in his one season as starter. He completed 321 of 450 pass attempts and ran for over 700 yards and 12 touchdowns.

He led his team to the 5A (largest classification) state championship and was named Texas Offensive Player of the Year. He was MVP of the state championship game as he completed 21 of 31 passes for 328 yards and four touchdowns.

McElroy said, "I think all the (back-up) quarterbacks are doing fine. We're all working hard to be better. We're not competing for next year's job now. That will come after the season, beginning in spring practice."

McElroy said, "I'm very happy to be at Alabama. It's a dream come true. It's interesting that all the schools I considered – Alabama, Texas Tech, North Carolina and TCU – have done well.

"I'm happy where I am. This is a place I want to be and where I always wanted to be."

Saban said that he thinks every back-up player has a challenge to prepare, but that a back-up quarterback has a special challenge "not knowing if he's going to play."

He said that McElroy has "done a very good job, even though he hasn't had many opportunities to play. It's important to know how to do the right thing so you'll perform when you get the opportunity to do it. Driven people do that.

"I'm very pleased with him. He does a very good job in practice every day. He does a good job of managing the game.

"I have been pleased with his progress.

"He has maturity and he's a smart guy and he has leadership qualities."

If McElroy doesn't get the job, it's like to be one of the two quarterbacks who have had most practice time, Star Jackson or Thomas Darrah.

Alabama all-star safety Rashad Johnson has seen Alabama's them perform on the scout team in preparing Bama's defense each week.

"Star did a great job of getting us ready for a really difficult quarterback when we played Arkansas State," Johnson said. "He has a strong arm in the passing game and he can also scramble. He's really matured since he got here."

Johnson said that Darrah, who has been third team this season, had to get time with the regular offense, but sometimes would come over and run the scout team and is a good quarterback.

As a non-scholarshipped player, Darrah has to be considered a long shot, but it is likely his performance in the 2008 A-Day Game didn't go unnoticed. He was more impressive than Nick Fanuzzi, perhaps one reason Fanuzzi elected to transfer prior to this season.

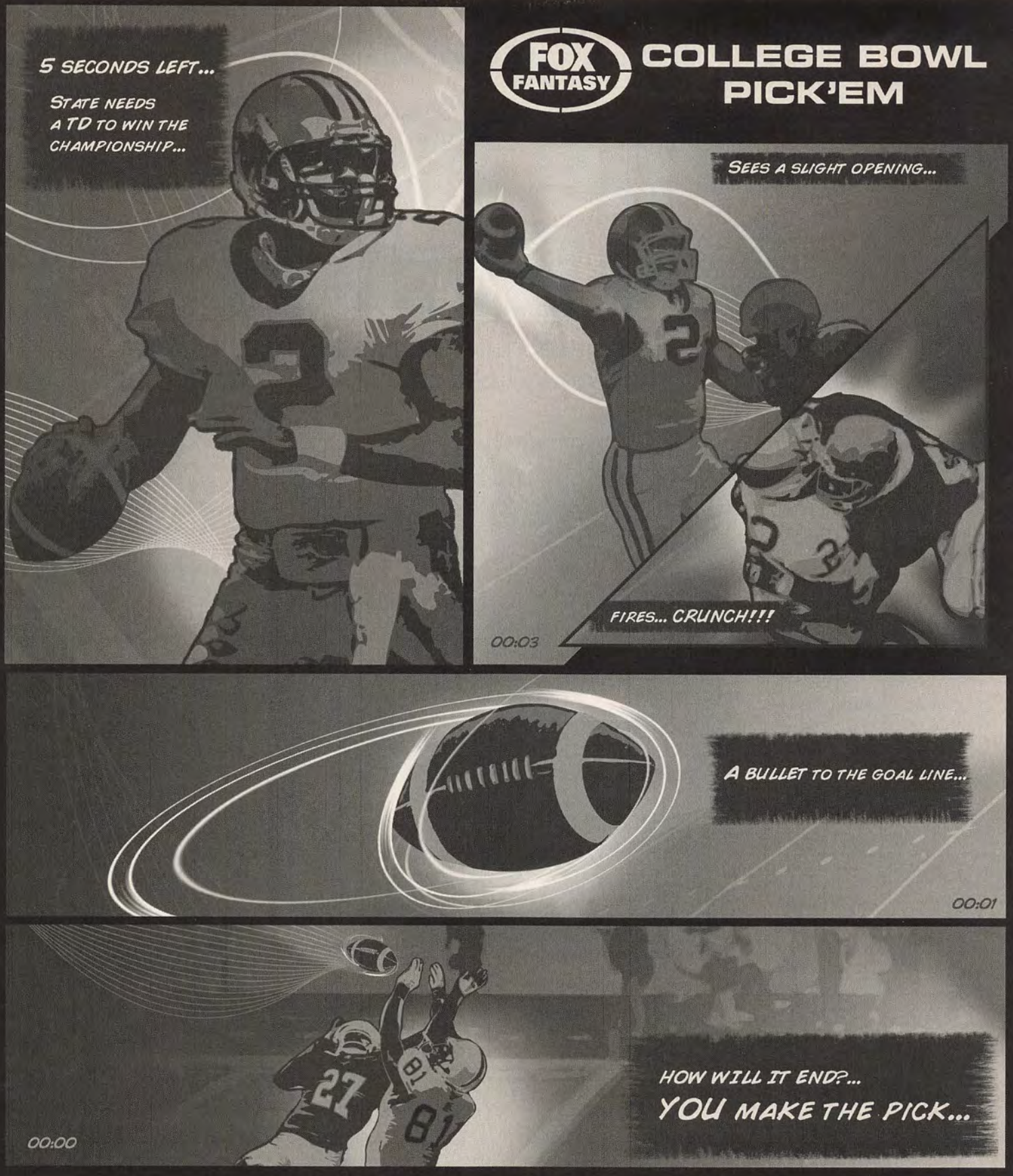
Darrah, a 6-5, 190-pound quarterback from Newnan, Georgia, has not played in his first two years at Bama and will be a sophomore in eligibility in 2009. In last year's A-Day Game he completed eight of 14 passes for 110 yards, including a 44-yard touchdown to Marquis Maze. He had no interceptions.

Star Jackson is an intriguing addition to the Alabama roster. The 6-3, 195-pound prep All-America from Lake Worth, Florida, had been expected by many to have a role in the offense in his initial season. Instead, he performed the role of the vast majority of college freshmen quarterbacks, redshirted and running the scout team.

Jackson has had to learn a new system from his days as a prep quarterback, although his skills fit with Alabama's pro-style scheme. Although he has running ability, in Alabama's offense that is reserved for scrambling. He was a four-star quarterback in Scout rankings as a dropback passer. In his prep career he passed for over 3,000 yards and 32 touchdowns, including completing 97 of 180 passes for 1,677 yards and 13 touchdowns as a senior.

Morgan Ogilvie, the son of Alabama legendary running back Major Ogilvie, was redshirted in 2008 as a walk-on quarterback. Ogilvie, 6-1, 185, had an outstanding prep career, but by the nature of his position with the squad in his first year will be well behind other candidates.

The same is true for incoming freshman A.J. McCarron, a slim (6-4, 180) all-state player from powerful St. Paul's in Mobile. McCarron, who is also a professional prospect as a baseball pitcher, was an early commitment to the Tide. He will not enter The University until after the spring semester. ■



FOX FANTASY **COLLEGE BOWL PICK'EM**

FOXSPORTS.COM on msn

©2008. The Fox Sports, and FoxSports.com names and logos are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Twentieth Century Fox and its related entities in the United States and/or other countries.

by Dave Telep, Scout.com Basketball Recruiting Expert

The Rich Get Richer

With so many top flight recruits still unsigned, this year's basketball recruiting period will last well into the spring

Our counterparts on the football side at Scout.com will tell you that national signing day is the most action-packed thrill ride this side of a Texas-Texas Tech pigskin contest. The footballers buckle up and prepare for one wild day of coast-to-coast nirvana next to the fax machines of America's most powerful programs.

Meanwhile, we basketball guys, despite repeated attempts to drum up the drama, aren't so fortunate. The early hoops signing period (Nov. 12-19) didn't have a single haymaker thrown college basketball's way. No last-second changes on the way to the press conference, just business as usual except for one thing: it was missing any decisions by five of America's top prospects.

Arianna Hoffman

"I think some of the guys wanted to wait and see if the coach is going to be there," John Wall, Scout.com's No. 2 overall prospect said. Wall, along with four other members of the Scout.com Top 10, allowed the signing period to pass without action.

On the surface, there seems to be little reason not to sign early. Getting the decision out of the way, taking the pressure off your senior year and immersing yourself in your high school and your future college team are things of the past. Gone are those days, such as when Chris Paul signed with Wake Forest and then attended a slew of Deacons practices when he was able to get over to campus. Instead, the climate is more like "let them sweat out my decision."

Actually, there's some sound reasoning behind not making an early decision. As Wall alluded to, elite players are concerned about the head coach staying around, since signing a national letter of intent locks you into that school. The reality is, these kids are committing to the coach as much or more than the school, and they don't want to be bound to a program if the head coach isn't going to be around. Now, in fairness, the NCAA has been very good about letting kids out of letters when the coach bolts, but it's a tough sell in advance.

The big national recruiting winners thus far are your typical college hoops powers. North Carolina, Texas, Florida, Villanova and Duke did well; the rich get richer. However, the national top 5 could change dramatically in a few months.

No. 1 Derrick Favors, No. 2 Wall, No. 4 Xavier Henry, No. 5 Renardo Sidney and No. 7 Lance Stephenson remain unsigned. Their decisions not only impact the national rankings, they might even factor into the national title equation.

Since 2003, only two Scout.com top-3 ranked players – Carmelo Anthony and Raymond Felton – earned national title rings. That could change with the school selections made by this talented fivesome.

TITLE GAME 2.0

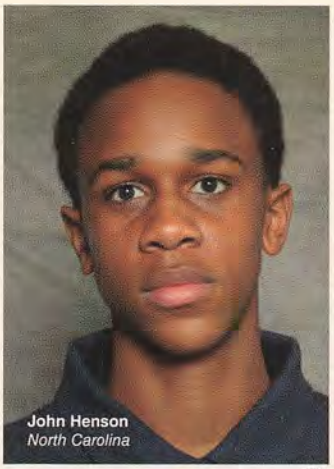
Last April when Memphis and Kansas needed overtime to decide the national champion, one would have thought the battle ended that April night in San Antonio. Not true. Since the two tangled for the trophy, they've engaged in an all-out sprint for the same players.

Memphis drew first blood, bringing C.J. Henry into the fold.

Henry, a former first-round pick of the New York Yankees, kicked baseball aside like a bad habit and rushed back to the hardwood. He needed a home, and considered both Kansas and Memphis. It's important to understand that his father played for the Jayhawks and his brother Xavier is the No. 1 recruiting target for both KU and Memphis.

Memphis 1, Kansas 0...but not for long. The Jayhawks brought in a host of big-timers for their ring ceremony. One of the players was No. 20 Thomas Robinson, a power forward out of Brewster Academy. You guessed it, he considered Kansas and Memphis. Days after the visit, Robinson was on board, making the tally KU 1, Memphis 1.

The final score in this brewing mega-recruiting rivalry won't be determined until the chill of winter subsides and spring rolls in. Up for grabs are commitments from Wall, Henry and small forward Dominic Cheek, all of whom count the Tigers and Jayhawks among their favorites. Heck, it's conceivable that both schools could jump into the fray for New York's finest, Lance Stephenson.


John Henson
North Carolina
Nike

KINGS OF THE ACC LOCK DOWN LEAGUE

This should come as no shocker: North Carolina has the nation's best recruiting class, and thus the de facto No. 1 class in its league as well. It's the second time since taking over for Matt Doherty that Head Coach Roy Williams scored the No. 1 class; in 2006, he signed the top player at three different positions.

This time around, Williams looked locally but thought globally. The big prize was hybrid Floridian John Henson. The 6-foot-10 Henson, who moved from Texas to Tampa his senior year, is arguably the top long-term prospect in America. He'll be joined by combo guard Dexter Strickland, wing Leslie McDonald and the Wears – David and Travis – a pair of Californians.

"We are very excited about this class," Williams commented. "All five do a great job both in the classroom and on the basketball court." Standard stuff from the coach, until you get to Henson. Basically, the coach lets you know he might have the next Chris Bosh on his hands. "He has long arms and his size enables him to block shots like a big guy, but I believe he will be a perimeter player for us." Look out, ACC.

While Williams was using planes as his preferred recruiting transportation, gold medal-winning coach Mike Krzyzewski chose cars. The Duke Blue Devils chased down two of the three best recruits in North Carolina when forwards Ryan Kelly and Mason Plumlee signed early. They'll try to turn the Junior National Team silver medals they earned with Team USA last summer into golden national championship rings under Coach K.

The Heels and the Devils combined to sign four top-25 players. Since 2006, the ACC has led the way in elite talent, signing the most top 25 players (25) of any league in America. The Big 12 was second with 17.

Top 20 scout.com Hoop Recruits

P	PR	Name (HS, Hometown)	Schools of Interest
PG	1	**John Wall** *(Word Of God Christian Academy) Raleigh, NC*	Baylor, Kansas, Memphis, Duke, NC State, Oregon, Miami (Fl)
SG	1	**Xavier Henry** *(Putnam City HS) Oklahoma City, OK*	Kansas, Memphis
SF	1	**Lance Stephenson** *(Abraham Lincoln HS) Brooklyn, NY*	Kansas, Kentucky, Memphis, USC
PF	1	**John Henson** *(Sickles HS) Tampa, FL*	Committed to North Carolina
C	1	**Derrick Favors** *(South Atlanta HS) Atlanta, GA*	Georgia, Georgia Tech, Memphis, North Carolina State, Florida State, Kentucky
PG	2	**Abdul Gaddy** *(Bellarmine Prep) Tacoma, WA*	Committed to Washington
SG	2	**Kenny Boynton** *(American Heritage School) Plantation, FL*	Committed to Florida
SF	2	**Jordan Hamilton** *(Dominguez HS) Compton, CA*	Committed to Texas
PF	2	**Renardo Sidney** *(Fairfax Senior HS) Los Angeles, CA*	Arizona State, USC, Virginia, Kentucky, Texas, Alabama, Mississippi State, Ohio State
C	2	**DeMarcus Cousins** *(Le Flore HS) Mobile, AL*	Committed to UAB
PG	3	**Tommy Mason-Griffin** *(Madison HS) Houston, TX*	Committed to Oklahoma
SG	3	**Avery Bradley** *(Findlay Prep) Henderson, NV*	Committed to Texas
SF	3	**Dominic Cheek** *(St. Anthony HS) Jersey City, NJ*	Kansas, Pittsburgh, Villanova, Indiana, Memphis, Rutgers, Seton Hall
PF	3	**Ryan Kelly** *(Ravenscroft School) Raleigh, NC*	Committed to Duke
C	3	**Daniel Orton** *(Bishop Mcguinness HS) Oklahoma City, OK*	Committed to Kentucky
SG	4	**Dexter Strickland** *(St. Patrick HS) Elizabeth, NJ*	Committed to North Carolina
SF	4	**Tyler Honeycutt** *(Sylmar Senior HS) Sylmar, CA*	Committed to UCLA
PF	4	**Wally Judge** *(Arlington Country Day School) Jacksonville, FL*	Committed to Kansas State
C	4	**Alex Oriakhi** *(Tilton School) Tilton, NH*	Committed to Connecticut
SG	5	**Michael Snaer** *(Rancho Verde HS) Moreno Valley, CA*	Florida State, Kansas, Marquette, Missouri, UCLA

The staffs at Clemson and North Carolina State were also highly successful, though on a different level. Each landed a centerpiece recruit, as Clemson's Oliver Purnell dialed up in-state forward Milton Jennings, while Sidney Lowe tapped his Georgia pipeline for the second year in a row, landing guard Lorenzo Brown for the Wolfpack.

If you're in search of a sleeper ACC class, check out the renaissance that Frank Haith is conducting in Coral Gables. He got big man Donnavan Kirk out of freezing Detroit and introduced him to South Beach. However, his sleeper recruit is Raleigh native Garrius Adams, an under-the-radar kid who Haith nabbed from South Carolina's clutches last summer.

Jordon Hull
Indiana
Jim Hawkins

INDIANA HOOSIERS

Unless Indiana is competing for national titles, something's just not right in college basketball. Well, we're here to tell you the axis of success is tilting back toward Bloomington. Though a national title run is still multiple years down the road, the wheels are back on the wagon.

Tom Crean constructs programs. It's what he does; it's in his DNA. The second-year IU skipper Crean landed a foundation recruiting class that should begin the redistribution of power in the Big Ten.

As the Marquette head coach, Crean specialized in recruiting trios. He first had Travis Diener, Robert Jackson and a lightly recruited wing named Dwyane Wade, then followed that group with Dominic James, Jerel McNeal and Wesley Matthews. His 2009 Indiana class has six recruits...but give us some leeway, and we'll make our case for an IU trio.

If Crean's true to his Marquette roots, guards Jordan Hulls and Maurice Creek will team with forward Christian Watford to inflict damage on the Big Ten. Hulls is the best story, as the point guard grew up in Bloomington but wasn't even considered a high-major prospect until the spring of his junior year. Based on an observation by assistant Tim Buckley, the former Ball State head coach, Crean pounced on him and he'll play the Diener role under Crean. It's a great class and just what Indiana needed.

While IU stole most of the Big Ten headlines with its No. 7 class, we'd be remiss if we didn't note the efforts of Minnesota and Illinois. As a Lexington resident, Tubby Smith sported a scowl. Toss him into the Big Ten, expose him to frigid temperatures and all of a sudden he's smiling? That's because Tubby signed two of the league's best recruits for Minnesota, bringing forwards Rodney Williams (an elite leaper) and Royce White (a blue-collar worker) into the fold. Both are in-staters. and it marks the first time in a few years that Wisconsin didn't invade the state and nab the Gophers' recruits.

Speaking of locking down the state, Bruce Weber is repairing the fences around Illinois. By aggressively offering the younger generation and hiring the leader of the youth movement, assistant Jerrance Howard, Weber locked up a strong class. Led by guards D.J. Richardson and Brandon Paul, the four-man group scored well nationally.

BLUE BLOOD RUNS THROUGH THE COMMONWEALTH

Even bigger than horse racing in the Commonwealth is basketball recruiting. This time around, the Kentucky Wildcats have bragging rights over Louisville: both signed solid recruiting classes, but UK's is rated in the top 10, while U of L's is in the top 25.

The reason for the bump toward Big Blue is simple: Daniel Orton. The center out of Oklahoma is a massive human being with great hands and a tender touch. When properly motivated – and you know Billy Clyde can get a rise out of you – Orton has exhibited beast-like potential. Mix in John Hood, an under-the-radar wing and G.J. Villarino, a back-up point man, and UK's solid.

Down the road in Louisville, Rick Pitino picked off another Seattle guard, the ultra-competitive and extremely athletic Peyton Siva. If Floridian combo forward Rakeem Buckles improves, Pitino will be able to gently rib his old point guard Billy Donovan for passing on him.

WAYNS GIVES 'NOVA TRUE GRIT

Jay Wright loves guards. Repeat: Jay Wright loves guards. Maalik Wayns, a native Philadelphian, was a no-brainer and is the future of Villanova's backcourt. The kid's a warrior with a HUGE chip on his shoulder that makes him a special player. Think of Wayns a pied piper of sorts, since we know guys love playing with him.

Despite his affinity for guards, it's Wright's job to recruit a post player every now and then, and it was the bigs turn this year. Enter Mouphtauo Yarou and Isaiah Armwood. Yarou is the best basketball player we've ever seen from Benin (OK, so he's one of only two we know of from the country), while Armwood's a potential three-man with big game.

Abdul Gaddy
Washington
Dawgman.com

BRUINS, HUSKIES, WILDCATS ALL INTERTWINED

The recruiting saga of the year involves Abdul Gaddy, the nation's No. 2 point guard out of Tacoma, WA. Pay attention, because this gets complicated.

Gaddy committed to the Arizona Wildcats under Lute Olson. Done deal, it was his dream school. Along the way, however, the relationship changed, as assistants Miles Simon and Josh Pastner left the staff and Gaddy's love for the school slowly deteriorated. Eventually, he de-committed.

It defies statistics (and

belief!) that Gaddy would re-unite with Arizona, but after some prodding from Olson and a guarantee from the coach that he'd be there to walk Gaddy down the graduation aisle in Tucson, the point re-committed. So, you can imagine Gaddy's reaction when Olson finally stepped down. That was the final straw and Gaddy de-committed a second time and opened up his process to UCLA and Washington.

Twice UCLA had finished second to Arizona in this contest, and it was widely thought the Bruins, despite their plethora of guards, would finally nab the gold, instead of the silver medal. Third time's a charm, right? Wrong. Lorenzo Romar and the Washington Huskies used the power of the local school to lure Gaddy into the fold in Seattle.

The battle to procure Gaddy's signature was worth waging. He'll just turn 17 during the second half of his senior season, and he was the MVP of Chris Paul's inaugural backcourt academy. Only Wall is more highly regarded than Gaddy, who by all rights, should be a junior in high school.

Mason Griffin
Oklahoma

Jim Hawkins

CHOMP ON THIS: BOYNTON TO FLORIDA

Kenny Boynton
Florida

Jim Hawkins

One day this story will be legend. Regardless, it's worth retelling right now. During his in-home visit with Kenny Boynton, Florida coach Billy Donovan brought a foam dart gun into Boynton's home. His instructions to the perimeter sniper were simple: if I say something you think isn't true, grab the toy gun and shoot me.

When the meeting was over, Donovan was unharmed and Boynton remained a better shot from behind the arc than in the living room. Weeks later, the Gators scored their most significant in-state recruit ever. Boynton told Duke "no", and in turn gave the Gators a legit piece of the puzzle that could help Billy D chase down title No. 3.

HORNS KEEP HOOKIN' 'EM

The Big 12 has done big things the past few seasons. Since 2006, five top-10 players signed with league schools, and only the ACC has more top-25 prospects than the Big 12. This year, the league fared well again.

Rick Barnes is showing absolutely no signs of slowing down. First there was T.J. Ford and then along came Kevin Durant. This year, Barnes added West Coast uber-defender Avery Bradley.

Last spring, the Longhorns held an elite camp. Bradley came for one reason: to match up against Horns recruit Nolan Dennis, an in-state prospect. The story, as told to us, goes as follows. Bradley requested the matchup with Dennis. After locking Dennis down and rendering him a non-factor, Bradley told the Texas staff his work was done here. He played one game, made his statement and enjoyed Austin the rest of the game. Bradley headlines a stellar class consisting of top-15 talent Jordan Hamilton and improving forward Shawn Williams, the Horns' numero uno in-state target.

North of Austin in Oklahoma, Jeff Capel and Travis Ford proved basketball isn't merely something to do until spring football starts. Both OU and OSU signed nationally relevant classes. Headling OU's haul is point guard Tommy Mason-Griffin ("Run TMG"), who entered his senior year as one of the nation's most improved players. Ford's class is highlighted by workhorse small forward Roger Franklin, a Texan.

Barack Obama doesn't have the market cornered on "change" this year. While multiple big dogs sat out the early signing party, those same kids will be poised to make a splash in the spring. "Change" will in fact be upon us once they lock down their decisions. ■

Top 20 Classes

Rk.	Team	C	Conf	Top 25	Top 50	Top 100	AVG
1	North Carolina	5	ACC	2	4	5	4.4
2	Texas	3	Big 12	2	3	3	4.67
3	Florida	3	SEC	1	2	3	4.33
4	Villanova	3	Big East	0	3	3	4
5	Duke	2	ACC	2	2	2	5
6	Kansas	2	Big 12	2	2	2	5
7	Indiana	6	Big Ten	0	1	4	3.67
8	UCLA	4	Pac-10	1	1	4	4.25
9	Kentucky	3	SEC	1	2	2	4
10	Washington	4	Pac-10	1	1	2	3.25
11	Minnesota	4	Big Ten	0	2	2	3.25
12	Connecticut	2	Big East	1	1	2	4.5
13	Illinois	4	Big Ten	0	0	3	3.75
14	Oklahoma	4	Big 12	1	1	2	4
15	Marquette	5	Big East	0	1	3	3.4
16	Oklahoma State	6	Big 12	0	2	2	3.17
17	NC State	3	ACC	0	1	2	3.67
18	Clemson	3	ACC	1	1	2	4
19	Louisville	4	Big East	0	1	2	3.5
20	Georgia Tech	4	ACC	0	0	2	3.5

Step Right Up

Hoops newcomers expected to contribute

With the losses of Mykal Riley and Richard Hendrix off of last year's 17-16 Alabama men's basketball team, playing time is available early and often for the three newest members of the team. Though their roles will differ dramatically, JaMychal Green, Andrew Steele and Anthony Brock will all be counted on by Coach Mark Gottfried to aid in getting the Crimson Tide back where he wants them: the NCAA Tournament.

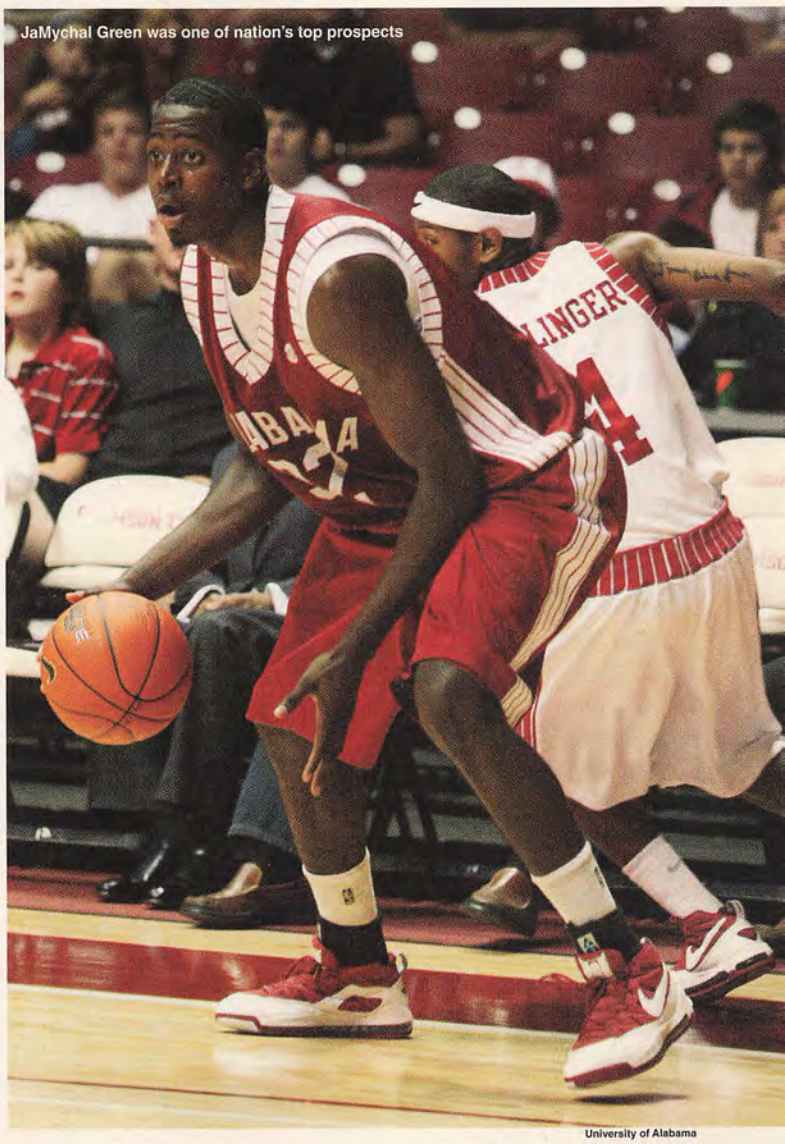
"We've got some new faces. We've got some young guys who are going to have to step up early," said Gottfried.

The centerpiece of Gottfried's 2008 class is, without a doubt, Green. The 6-9, 220-pound freshman from Montgomery's St. Jude Institute brings athleticism not seen in an Alabama big man his size since the likes of Antonio McDyess hit the Coleman Coliseum floor in the 1993-94 season. Green, whose game and skills somewhat resemble those of a freshman McDyess, is an aggressive leaper who is brimming with confidence. He expects to step in and pick up where Hendrix, a regular double-double performer, left off. If so, he'll have to earn it.

"JaMychal has to earn it like every freshman does," Gottfried said. "We expect him to come in and compete pretty hard for it. But you've also got Yamene (Coleman) and Demetrius Jemison and Justin Knox. Those three guys, too, have all played. Justin hasn't played as much. But I don't think you take one player who is a potential 20 points per game guy and 10 or 11 rebounds guy like Richard would have been and just replace him with another one sitting there that's ready to get 20 and 10 on the first day of practice. That doesn't happen. The younger guys have to step up. JaMychal's got to get ready quick. We've got to do a good job of helping him get prepared as fast as we can. But I don't know that it's just going to be one player to fill that void.

"We miss a proven scorer in Richard Hendrix but the young guys are doing great. JaMychal Green is playing hard and well so we are a lot different than we were a year ago, we are a lot quicker. We are doing some things differently but the majority of the changes have to do with the people."

The quickness brought by the three newcomers will somewhat



JaMychal Green was one of nation's top prospects

University of Alabama

alter the Tide's style of play. For instance, Hendrix was more a plodder when it came to running the court. Not so with Green. Gottfried said, "We are going to push it and get after people defensively. We have the personnel to be a lot more of a defensive team. You cannot expect certain guys to pressure the ball physically if that is not their strength. We are a much quicker team now," Gottfried noted.

"What we've got to do is try to utilize what we have. Last year, obviously, with a guy like Richard in there, that was a focal point of a lot of what we did. You had to slow down a little bit for him at times. Hopefully this year we can get back to where we'll score a lot more points and we'll be getting up and down the floor and really defending people a little bit differently and all those types of things."

For his part, Green seems ready, both physically and mentally. He quickly figured out his role. "I like to bang around the paint," he said. "I'll contribute as a rebounder, and as a power player, and just pick up where Richard (Hendrix) left off." Strong words, but Green has shown early he may well be able to back them up. In the November 2 Crimson-White scrimmage, he scored 18 points to go with eight boards and a pair of blocks. Green says he's worked a lot on his mid-range game on offense. Green's teammates call him "Mike," short for JaMychal.

Green's high school resume is quite impressive. He was chosen the state of Alabama's 2008 "Mr. Basketball" after leading St. Jude to 1A state titles his senior and sophomore seasons. He posted averages of 24 points, 16 boards and seven blocks. Just after graduating, Green played for the USA National Under 18 team at the FIBA Americas Championships in Argentina. In the prestigious McDonald's All-American game, Green showed America his skills by hammering home a pair of tomahawk dunks, rebounding, blocking shots and running the floor, much like McDyess did as an 18-year old 15 years ago.

While Justin Knox and Demetrius Jemison may battle for a while for the starting high post role, it's a very safe bet Green will man the low blocks.

Brock is an interesting study at point guard, standing only 5-9. His game is somewhat similar to that of his assistant coach, Antoine Pettway, who helped recruit him. Brock is a pure point guard with ball-handling and passing skills combined with three-poiint accuracy and a very Pettway-like trait: hustle.

Brock explains his game thusly: "Play hard, to the best of my ability, use my quickness, and do whatever I can do so we can win. Just be a team player, that's all I can do."

Gottfried said Brock was signed as insurance, but is expected to contribute. "When we signed him if you remember the timetable with Ron Steele it was undecided. There was an unknown there as far as which way that would turn out, and you obviously had to be prepared. He's a good player. We're going to see how he fits in this year with our team. If he's impressive like we think he can be, then we're going to try to get him some minutes. But, obviously, once Ron decides to come back, Ron is healthy, and Ron plays like everybody anticipates him playing, then the need for another point guard isn't nearly as great. At the time, you didn't know that. So we'll work through that as best we can with him. We'll see how it turns out and try to make sure that we do the right thing for everybody involved."

There is also the possibility, should a team zone Bama, of

Anthony Brock looks like good insurance at point guard

University of Alabama

putting Brock on the point and Ronald Steele on a wing. "Absolutely," Gottfried said. "Not only against a zone but also in man. He's a pretty good little player. You're going to see. He's small but he's got some moxie. He's tough. He can shoot it. He was a very, very good player last year at Itawamba (Mississippi) Community College. Those are all the type questions sometimes that you don't know when you sit here in October: how good is he really going to be? And how well is a guy like Senario Hillman going to play? And how well does Brandon Hollinger shoot the ball? He's a senior now; he's been with us four years. And Alonzo Gee? Here comes Mikhail Torrance. Andrew Steele: we like him. They shake themselves out. The cream rises to the top with every team. This team will be no different."

Andrew Steele has a chance to play with brother Ron

University of Alabama

Gottfried said, "Obviously with a guy like Anthony Brock, you'd like to get him some chances.. I don't think that Ron Steele needs to be a 40-minute-a-game guy like he was for us three years ago. But, again, we'll see how it goes. We'll see how the team develops. Some of those things you don't know exactly how they're going to turn out, but we'll hope that Ron is ready to go all year long. He's going to play significant minutes. If he's 100 per cent healthy, we're not going to play him 12 minutes a game. We're going to try and play that guy (Brock) a little bit because he can help us."

Senario Hillman sees Brock helping quickly. "Anthony is a hard player," Hillman said. "He does everything hard, and everything well. He can shoot the ball well, and he also can penetrate and pitch. He just works hard.

"He's a great player, he fits in with us, and I think he's going to do a great job."

Brock averaged 18.5 points, five assists last year at Itawamba Community College. His first Coleman Coliseum appearance saw Brock score 13 points and deal three assists in the Crimson-White game.

Senior wing Alonzo Gee likes what he's seen of the new guys. "I think all of them are doing pretty well," Gee said. "JaMychal (Green) looks real good, Andrew (Steele) and (Anthony) Brock, they have all done real well. JaMychal is athletic, Brock is a great point guard, and Steele can defend and shoot the ball, so all of them should do some good things this year.

"Those guys can play. They're very tough. They're smart players, and we're going to need them down the line to win some games."

With star signee Tony Mitchell not qualifying, someone will have to come in and give Gee a rest when the senior gets winded or in foul trouble. One possibility is junior Mikhail Torrance (converted from point guard to off guard), but Gottfried says Andrew Steele can swing from the off guard to small forward.

"I think Andrew is a guy who can," said the coach. "And I think when you say, 'Who else can play the three?' I think Alonzo Gee is the only guy that if you just had to make a definition of what position he is, he's a small forward. But I think if he's not in the game you can see us playing three guards and that third guy being your small forward. Whether that's Mikhail Torrance, whether it's Andrew Steele, maybe even Senario Hillman and playing two smaller guys with Senario. So we'll see. We'll see how it works out. We've got some versatile players. I think they can move around and play some different spots. So I'm not so caught up on who's the one, two and three guard."

That makes sense to Andrew Steele, who is ready to contribute at two-guard or small forward. "In this offense, if you know one, you know the other (position)," said the younger Steele, who is very excited about playing with his brother for the first time ever.

Can he match up against other SEC small forwards defensively? "I think I could," he said. "I think I can hold my own."

Andrew Steele scored 13 points and grabbed eight rebounds in the Crimson-White scrimmage. At John Carroll Catholic High in Birmingham, he was named 5A player of the year by the Alabama Sports Writers Association after averaging 16 points, 8.4 rebounds and 4.6 assists his senior season.

About his game, Andrew Steele said, "I just try to do whatever I can to get my teammates involved and help my team win, whether its playing defense, scoring, rebounding, or whatever it is."

Ronald Steele has liked what he's seen of the new players. "They've been really impressive," he said. "All of them have shown flashes of greatness, really. Some of the dunks JaMychal's had have caused us all to say, 'Wow!' Anthony Brock has quickness, and Andrew has athleticism. All those guys are more than capable. All those guys have done a really good job.

Although this will be the first time Ronald and Andrew have played on an organized team together, Ron knows from years of backyard games with his brother that Andrew can play.

"Andrew's done a great job," Ron said. "Playing with him has been exciting for me, to see how he's developed. He's been playing a lot of guard and a lot of small forward. We're a versatile team, and everybody has to learn each position."

Andrew Steele' game compares somewhat to that of ex-Bama and NBA player Eric Washington.

Torrance noticed one thing quickly about his new teammates: "They play hard," he said. "When they first got here, it was a big adjustment, but they've been working out in the off-season since high school."

There's another thing that has jumped out at Torrance regarding the newcomers. "Their size," he said. "When I first got here, I was kind of thin. They look SEC-ready, right now. I feel like they're ready to go."

Whether Gottfried chooses to go with an eight-, nine- or ten-man rotation, look for all three new Tiders to be in the mix for quality minutes. ■

BASKETBALL *BY CARY L. CLARK*

Take A Step Back

Three-point shot is more challenging

Like all the other teams playing Division 1 college basketball, the 2008-09 Alabama Crimson Tide men will have to remember to step back a little before attempting a three-point shot. That's because, for the first time since the shot was introduced for the 1986-87 season, the distance has changed. For 22 seasons, the shot was good if made from behind a line that was 19 feet, 9 inches from the basket. This year, that distance has increased by a foot to 20 feet, 9 inches.

Alabama Coach Mark Gottfried was a master at shooting the old shot during his playing career. Perhaps surprisingly, he is in favor of the extended shot.

"I think it's great," Gottfried said. "I voted for it. I wanted it in college basketball. I think the old line was too close. I've got a 13 year old who been in sixth grade games and makes five or six of them even when he's 11 or 12 years old. That's too short for our level. I think it's going to change the game a little bit. I think there are players like (Chris) Lofton and JaJuan Smith last year at Tennessee—they're going to make that shot. (Former Tide player) Mykal Riley, that (extended) line wouldn't have affected him. There are other players in college basketball for whom that extra foot matters; they've got to prove that they can make it."

Gottfried said that if a player doesn't prove he can make the longer three-point shot, the man guarding him gets the advantage. The defender "may not have to go all the way out there and get them. So now he may be able to help inside more and those type things in the game. So I think it's going to have an impact."

Through NCAA-approved individual workouts and early season practices, Gottfried has a good gauge on whom and whom not to give the three-point "green light" to.

"On our team, Ron Steele has been a great three-point shooter," the coach said. "Brandon Hollinger shot a great percentage last year. He didn't take a ton of them but shot a great percentage.

"You don't want shooters. You want makers.

"You want guys who can make them and make a good percentage. So with our team and that new line, that's going to be a little bit of a learning curve. But I think probably it's that way for everybody in the country. You used to watch TV every night and you see a team come down on the fast break and see some big guy floating down there as a trail. Every coach lets a big guy jack one up every now and then just to make him feel good. You probably won't see that much any more. It's a different shot."

Steele, back for a fifth year running the point for the Tide, is okay with the new line. "I haven't really had problems so far, and hopefully, that will continue," he said. "I've always been able to step back a little more, and so it hasn't bothered me. Hopefully, it won' affect me much. It's an adjustment, just from a spacing standpoint. I think everybody on our team has been shooting it pretty well, because we've been practicing it since the summer. But it is an adjustment. Everybody's really improved his shooting. If you can shoot it, you have to take another step out to guard even further out, so I think that will open up driving lanes and spacing will be a little better" Steele said that can also open up things for inside players in the paint.

The veteran Steele has a 43 per cent career mark behind the arc, but he warned fans not to expect the same gaudy shooting percentages they may have seen before. "I think the new line will drop the percentages a lot, because guys usually take shots a few steps behind the line, and some guys will end up taking the NBA three, which is not a high-percentage shot.

"Some of the shots you were used to taking as threes are now long two-pointers, so that's something that we'll really have to continue to work on," Steele said. "Certain plays are designed to get to the three-point line, so now you have to move everything out a step.

"A lot of people are going to zone us to test our three-point shooting, but they'll see. Guys are getting better."

Visitors to Coleman Coliseum this year will notice not only the new crimson-colored three-point line behind the old white line (which is still used by NCAA women's teams), but also a lighter colored floor just inside the new arc to further help players know where they are.

"It's a little confusing when you're used to seeing the darker floor color in there, but I think we're adjusting to it, and I don't think that will be a big deal once the season starts," Steele said.

Mikhail Torrence looks to be more propductive at wing

University of Alabama

"It can help us, just because we'll know where we're at," Alonzo Gee said. "It's not strange at all, and they're going to leave it that way."

At the team's first organized scrimmage, the November 2 Crimson-White game, the Tide as a team shot 33.3 per cent behind the new line. Steele hit 3-of-8 behind the new arc. Hollinger was 4-14, and a much-improved Senario Hillman hit 3-for-6. Hillman struggled behind the arc last year, hitting only six of his 41 attempts.

This year, Hillman says fans can expect a new Senario behind the arc. "I've been doing real good on the new shot, he said. "This off-season, I really worked on my jump shot. That's the main thing I've been working on, because that's the main thing I feel like I've been lacking on. I've been working on that, and I had to find my confidence back in my shot, because when I missed like three jump shots, I'd get down on myself. I had to learn to block that out, and just keep playing, and keep shooting, and don't worry about the last shot." Hillman said Ronald Steele has worked with him extensively on improving his jumper.

Hillman, like Steele, knows that the Tide will see a lot of zone defenses early on. That may be a mistake. "They probably need to look out for the whole team," Hillman said. "Everyone has been shooting the ball well."

Gottfried challenged 6-5 junior wing Mikhail Torrance to improve on his 4-for-23 performance behind the arc last season. That included just 2-for-6 in SEC play. "My wife can make two," Gottfried said, only half-jokingly. Teammates say fans will be surprised when they see Torrance against the zone this year. Gottfried agrees. "Mikhail Torrance, believe it or not, has really improved his three-point shooting," the coach said.

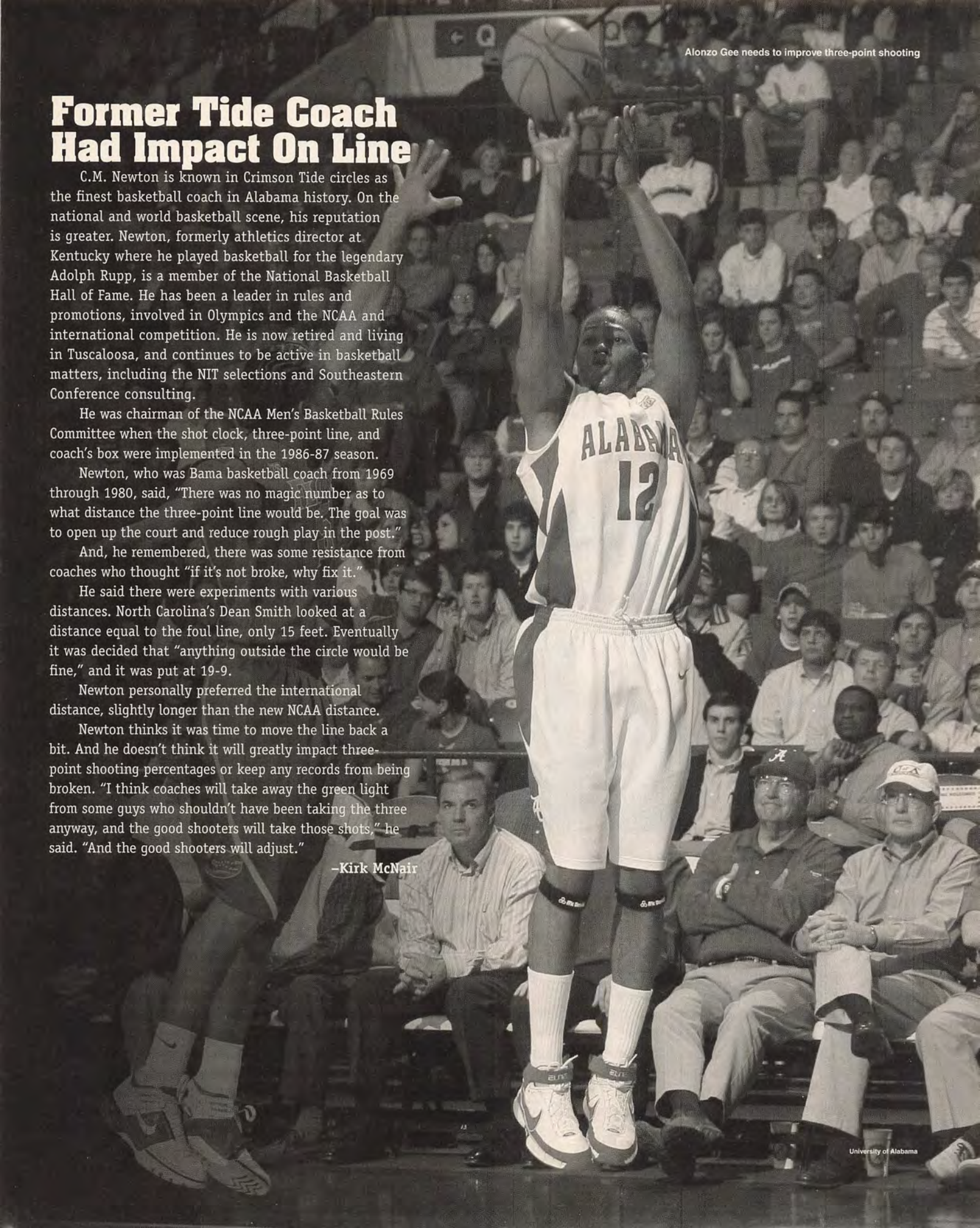
Newcomer Anthony Brock was 3-for-6 in the scrimmage, and had perhaps the most interesting perspective on the longer shot.

Brock, a 5-9 junior college transfer, said weight room work with strength coach Terry Jones has paid off for him "Its taken me a little bit of work," he said, smiling. "I had to get a little bit stronger to be able to get it up there a little bit more, but if I keep practicing and getting on it, I'll be able to knock it down." Last year at Itawamba Community College, Brock knocked in 47.3 per cent behind the arc and averaged three treys per game.

"I think we feel pretty comfortable about it," said senior wing player Gee. "That's because we spent the whole summer working on it. I think its going to be all right for us this year. We worked hard on it, and we're going to be pretty good this year on it. The shots have been falling pretty good for everybody on the team." Last year, with the shorter arc, Gee shot just under 30 per cent, and for his career, he has fired at a 31.4 per cent clip.

"I think that Alonzo worked really hard this summer," Gottfried said. "I think that he realizes there are some things with his game that have been really good, and there are some things where he wants to make sure that he improves upon. I think he's tried this summer to really do a good job with that. His ball handling, his shooting percentages from the three-point line or inside the line; his body to me looks really, really good."

Other Tide players who have shown proficiency with the new distance are senior guard Hollinger and freshman wing Andrew Steele, Ron's younger brother. Hollinger hit 43 per cent of his treys last season and has a career mark of 40.5 per cent, which is considered excellent. Andrew Steele hit 2-for-6 in the scrimmage, and showed a propensity at John Carroll Catholic High to hit behind the arc when open. It must run in the family. ■



Alonzo Gee needs to improve three-point shooting

Former Tide Coach Had Impact On Line

C.M. Newton is known in Crimson Tide circles as the finest basketball coach in Alabama history. On the national and world basketball scene, his reputation is greater. Newton, formerly athletics director at Kentucky where he played basketball for the legendary Adolph Rupp, is a member of the National Basketball Hall of Fame. He has been a leader in rules and promotions, involved in Olympics and the NCAA and international competition. He is now retired and living in Tuscaloosa, and continues to be active in basketball matters, including the NIT selections and Southeastern Conference consulting.

He was chairman of the NCAA Men's Basketball Rules Committee when the shot clock, three-point line, and coach's box were implemented in the 1986-87 season.

Newton, who was Bama basketball coach from 1969 through 1980, said, "There was no magic number as to what distance the three-point line would be. The goal was to open up the court and reduce rough play in the post."

And, he remembered, there was some resistance from coaches who thought "if it's not broke, why fix it."

He said there were experiments with various distances. North Carolina's Dean Smith looked at a distance equal to the foul line, only 15 feet. Eventually it was decided that "anything outside the circle would be fine," and it was put at 19-9.

Newton personally preferred the international distance, slightly longer than the new NCAA distance.

Newton thinks it was time to move the line back a bit. And he doesn't think it will greatly impact three-point shooting percentages or keep any records from being broken. "I think coaches will take away the green light from some guys who shouldn't have been taking the three anyway, and the good shooters will take those shots," he said. "And the good shooters will adjust."

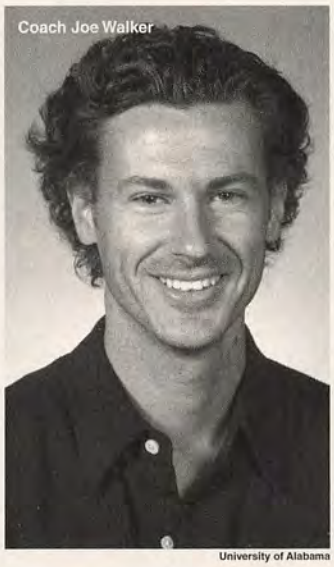
–Kirk McNair

University of Alabama

Title Team

Alabama men end Arkansas hogging

Joe Walker knew that he had a very good cross country team, a squad capable ot winning this year's NCAA Men's Championship. But before that national title opportunity came another that has been hogged by Arkansas for 17 years. This year, Alabama became the first team other than the Razorbacks to win the Southeastern Conference championship since Arkansas joined the league in 1991.


Coach Joe Walker

University of Alabama

Alabama placed all five scoring runners in the top ten to win the 2008 championship in Starkville on November 3. Bama scored 32 points (low point total wins in cross country) to take its first SEC crown since 1973.

"I'm really proud of the way the guys ran as a group," Walker said. "We told them `Don't get selfish and don't let your ego come above your team.' They put the team first and I'm really, really proud of them."

Alabama was led by junior Tyson David, who finished in second place, covering the 8,000-meter Mississippi State course with a time 23:16.26. Junior Emmanuel Bor (fifth) and senior Augustus Maiyo (sixth) crossed the finish line in 23:31.26 and 23:31.95, respectively. Alabama's top five was rounded out by senior Abraham Kutingala (ninth) and sophomore Andrew Kirwa (10th) turning in times of 23:43.25 and 23:53.05.

Freshman Zac Edwards finished with a time of 24:59.06 in 29th place. He was followed by freshman Stephen Payne (60th), freshman Nathan Corder (65th) and freshman Austin Duckworth (89th) turning in times of 25:52.59, 26:03.87 and 27:37.17.

Alabama's top five all garnered All-SEC honors. Edwards was named to the All-SEC Freshman team. He was the fourth freshman to cross the line.

The top seven freshmen are selected to the All-SEC Freshman Team while the top 14 athletes overall are selected to the All-SEC Team.

There were 96 competitors in the race. Girma Mesecho of Auburn won the individual title with a time of 23:11.26.

Auburn was second with 62 points. Arkansas (75), Florida (107) and Tennessee (130) rounded out the top five. They were followed by Mississippi State (186), Kentucky (192), Georgia (227), Mississippi (245), LSU (257) and Vanderbilt (292).

Alabama is the first team other than Arkansas to win the conference championship since Tennessee won in 1990. Arkansas joined the SEC in 1991 and won every title since. The Razorbacks had a string of 34 consecutive championships going back to their Southwest Conference days when they had 17 in a row before joining the SEC.

In women's competition held the same day at Mississippi State, Alabama placed seventh, its best finish since 2000 when they finished fifth.

The Crimson Tide of Coach Randy Hasenbank was led by freshman Sara Vaughn who finished 10th covering the 6,000 meter course in 20:59.06. Freshman Kelsey Johnson followed closely in 11th turning in a time of 21:01.50. The women garnered All-SEC and All-SEC Freshman honors as well as running the third and fourth fastest times in Alabama school history.

Vaughn and Johnson were the second and third freshmen in the field to finish. It is also the first time Alabama has had two female athletes earned All-SEC at the same cross country meet since 2000 when Ashley LaBudde and Aly Mills both earned the honor.

The Arkansas women won the meet. ■

Prep Prospects

Tradition counts big for Bama in recruiting

The numbers almost have to be repeated to get the full impact. As football prospects examine their choices, those recruited by The University of Alabama learn of the extraordinary tradition of the Crimson Tide. And they see that in just his second season Coach Nick Saban has returned Bama to its place among the elite of college football.That prominence was demonstrated as Alabama reached number one in the nation this season. It adds to the rich tradition of the Crimson Tide, a tradition that includes 12 national championships, 21 Southeastern Conference championships, 55 bowl games and 31 bowl victories prior to the 2008 season. Those aren't just good numbers. They are record numbers.

And while there is great pride in the past, under Saban the emphasis is on the future. That future looks bright beginning with the Saban staff signing the nation's number one recruiting class in 2008. The class featured impact players such as wide receiver Julio Jones, tailback Mark Ingram, linebacker Dont'a Hightower, and nose tackle Terrence Cody. All four were instrumental in Alabama football success in their inaugural season with the Tide, a situation not lost on prospects for the signing class of 2009.

By Signing Day it is expected that Alabama will again rank among the nation's best in football recruiting.

The Crimson Tide program is well known in the state of Alabama. Out-of-state prospects indicate they also impressed by the Bama tradition.

Certainly there are other important aspects in recruiting. The opportunity for playing time, which Saban has proved is possible for newcomers, is high on the list for many. Exposure of the program, with a sold out stadium and frequent television coverage is important. Facilities, the academic support system, and the coaching staff all figure in.

One can just imagine prospects going down the list for Alabama.

Check.

Check.

Check....

Mike Marrow, Scout Media three-star fullback from Toledo (Ohio) Central Catholic, made a commitment to Alabama during the summer. Marrow committed to Alabama over prestigious programs including Penn State, Michigan and Boston College.

Scout

"The tradition of Alabama football is very cool," Marrow said. "The main reason for my commitment though was because of my dad and Coach Saban. I got to know about the Alabama tradition and Bear Bryant by watching Sports Century. Not only does Alabama have great tradition of championships, but also all of the All-Americans they've had is impressive."

Marrow understands winning is very important at Alabama. The 6-1, 240-pound commitment watched the Tide closely during the season.

"It's all about championships when it comes to Alabama," he said. "I've been watching their games and think both offense and defense look strong, particularly Terrence Cody."

"I like what I've seen from the backs, wide receiver and offensive line. I believe they will get to a big bowl game."

Marrow had a very productive senior season and led his team to an undefeated regular season record.

"I check out all the websites," Marrow said. "It looks like Coach Saban is bringing in some good athletes and a lot of big boys. I expect Alabama to close again with one of the nation's top recruiting classes."

Alabama dipped in the state of Georgia and picked one of the state's biggest sleeper products in Chance Warmack, Scout three-star offensive guard from Atlanta Westlake.

Warmack was a big producer at summer camp in Tuscaloosa where he earned an offer from the Tide. Several other schools

Scout

Scout

Scout

Scout

extended scholarship offers including Auburn, Arkansas and Rutgers. He made a commitment to Alabama and has remained solid with the decision. Warmack was to be graduated from high school in December and enroll at Alabama in January.

"Carrying on the great tradition of Alabama football serves as an inspiration to me," said Warmack. "You see teams changing uniforms all the time, but Alabama hasn't changed theirs. It's the same from back in the day. Continuity helps to serve as a bridge from past to present."

Warmack looked at several aspects when making his college decision.

"The history and bowl tradition were only a part of the equation," he said. "I looked at the whole picture. I mainly want to focus on here and now. Coach Saban and his staff have Alabama in a position where they're going to be competing for SEC and BCS championships year after year."

A surprise to the recruiting class was the commitment of Michael Bowman, Scout three-star wide receiver from Rossville (Georgia) Ridgeland. Bowman had not listed Alabama among favorites until late in the summer. He made a commitment to the Tide over several scholarship offers which included Auburn and LSU. The 6-4, 220-pound prospect knew very well of the tradition of Alabama football.

"It's real good to be a part of it," said Bowman. "Part of the reason I committed to Alabama was to play in those kind of games. It made a big difference in my decision. I like the direction the team is headed. Alabama is going to be good and in title contention for a least the next four or five years."

Bowman sees the Crimson Tide being even better in the future and is excited about arriving on campus.

"The first year I get there we are going undefeated," he said. "I know the first year I am there we'll be better than this year."

Of all the Alabama commitments there is one especially who has shown a lot of excitement about becoming a part of the Crimson Tide family. Kellen Williams, Scout three-star offensive tackle from Snellville (Georgia) Brookwood, committed to Alabama in the spring after receiving more than a dozen scholarship offers from schools across the country.

Williams is a solid commitment and working to help recruit players to Alabama. He is aware of the tradition and even attended the Tide's previous two bowl games.

"Alabama's tradition is pretty solid," said Williams. "It blew me away watching Alabama as a kid. It is unbelievable to think about Alabama leading the country in bowl appearances and bowl victories.

"I went to the last two Independence Bowls with my parents, and it is great to see how many fans come out to support the team. It doesn't matter if it's a 6-6 team, or the Sugar Bowl, the fans will always show up and support us."

Another SEC school was in strong contention for Williams, but Alabama's post season numbers made it an easy decision.

"I was being recruited very hard by Vandy, and I liked their coaches and the team," he said. "Vanderbilt is a great school, but it really appeals to kids my age who are coming out of high school to be able to go to a bowl game.

"The people who host the bowl game give the team and players a lot of stuff. I've heard of sponsors handing out X-boxes, Play Stations and other things to the players on the participating teams."

The Georgia native has taken note of the way the coaching staff and players have performed during the season.

"I have been very impressed with the job Coach Saban has done since arriving at Alabama," Williams said. "He is one of the best coaches in the country, but I don't think very many people thought he could turn the program around this quickly.

"I think Rashad Johnson and Antoine Caldwell have been doing a great job as leaders. I think they have really helped the team by providing the leadership that is needed on the field. Some other guys deserve some credit for their leadership roles, also."

Alabama fans have no need to worry about Williams looking around at other schools before National Signing Day.

"My commitment is concrete," he said. "I am very proud to be a part of a program like Alabama. I can't wait to get there this summer and start working toward my future."

Nico Johnson, Scout five-star middle linebacker from Andalusia, is one of the top overall commitments in the class. Johnson is one of two five-stars (the other running back Trent Richardson from Pensacola Escambia in Florida), and is the highest ranked in-state recruit committed to the Tide. Johnson grew up following Alabama football and has always known about the tradition of bowl victories.

"It's crazy," said Johnson. "Alabama was always having great seasons back then. If they weren't winning the SEC championship, or the National Championship they were playing in major bowl games. I think it's outstanding.

"The fact they play in so many bowl games wasn't much of a factor in my decision. I wanted to go where I felt the most at home. My mom is sick a lot, and I wanted to stay close to home. My heart told me I should be at Alabama more so than at Auburn."

Johnson had been considering an official visit to Auburn, but is

Scout

Scout

solid with the commitment to the Tide.

"I think the season is going great," he said late in the season. "They finally completed a game by playing a full four quarters. They have to continue to play hard each week, and do what the coaches tell them to do. I think everything is going pretty good for me. I'm solid with my commitment to Alabama."

A player with tremendous upside potential is Anthony Orr, Scout three-star defensive tackle from Harvest Sparkman. Orr has all the tools to become a dominant SEC lineman. He knows about the Tide's tradition, but it did not play an important factor when making his college decision.

"I think the tradition is a great thing for the program," said Orr. "I want to continue to help that going. The tradition of playing in bowl games wasn't that big of a factor for me. I felt like Alabama was the best place for me to go for the next few years of my life. My commitment to Alabama is very strong."

Quinton Dial, Scout three-star defensive tackle from Clay-Chalkville, is one of the biggest players in the class. The 6-5, 310-pound prospect committed to Alabama to start the summer and has no regrets. The tradition of the Alabama football program played a big role in Dial's decision.

"No one in college football has ever done that before," said Dial. "Alabama has more bowl appearances and more bowl wins than anyone else. I just want to be a part of that. It had a big part in my decision because I knew Coach Saban would turn the program around as soon as he was hired."

Dial has been very impressed with the Tide during the regular season.

"I think Alabama is playing real well right now," he said. "They just have to take them one game at a time and keep playing hard. They don't need to worry about my commitment. My commitment is very strong."

Alabama's rich tradition of bowl wins and championships has certainly remained in the minds of recruits. Despite the lack of championship rings since 1999, recruits know Alabama is beginning to restore itself to national prominence.

Alabama fans across the country are excited to see a rebirth of the Tide. Recruits from across the country are taking a closer look at the tradition, history and future at The University of Alabama. Alabama will likely sign close to 25 players in the class of 2009. Recruits see security in Saban's second season as the head coach, a strong statement in the present and the future looking bright. ■

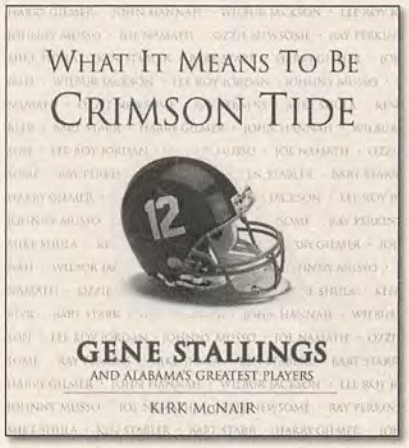
Scout.com-Southeast recruiting writers Tim Gilbreath and Richard Stover contributed to this report.

What It Means To Be Crimson Tide

Gene Stallings and Alabama's Greatest Players

Alabama football means championships and All-America players and, for many, a man in a houndstooth hat. Some 60 Alabama players who performed over a 75-year period tell us "What It Means To Be Crimson Tide."

Former Alabama Coach Gene Stallings and 'BAMA Editor Kirk McNair selected players who tell the stories of games and practices, coaches and teammates. The story of "What It Means To Be Crimson Tide."



Among those featured are Harry Gilmer, Bart Starr, Lee Roy Jordan, Joe Namath, Ken Stabler, Johnny Musso, John Hannah, Ozzie Newsome, and Jay Barker.

Gene Stallings reveals much of his philosophy and reveals why he did NOT follow Paul Bryant as Alabama head football coach in 1983. Kirk McNair introduces the players.

"What It Means To Be Crimson Tide–Gene Stallings and Alabama's Greatest Players" is a hardcover book of over 300 pages in an oversized format with archival photographs throughout. To order ($27.95 plus tax, shipping and handling) call 1-205-345-5074. You may request a personalized autograph from Kirk McNair.

BallQube, LC

The Only football display that is made to hold youth, college, and NFL Regulation size footballs.

Protect and show off that cherished keepsake with this or many of our other styles that are available.

wwww.ballqube.com
1-800-543-1470

BallQube, LC Grandstand Football Display

Mention or Enter Promo Code: Scout.com to receive an additional 10% off

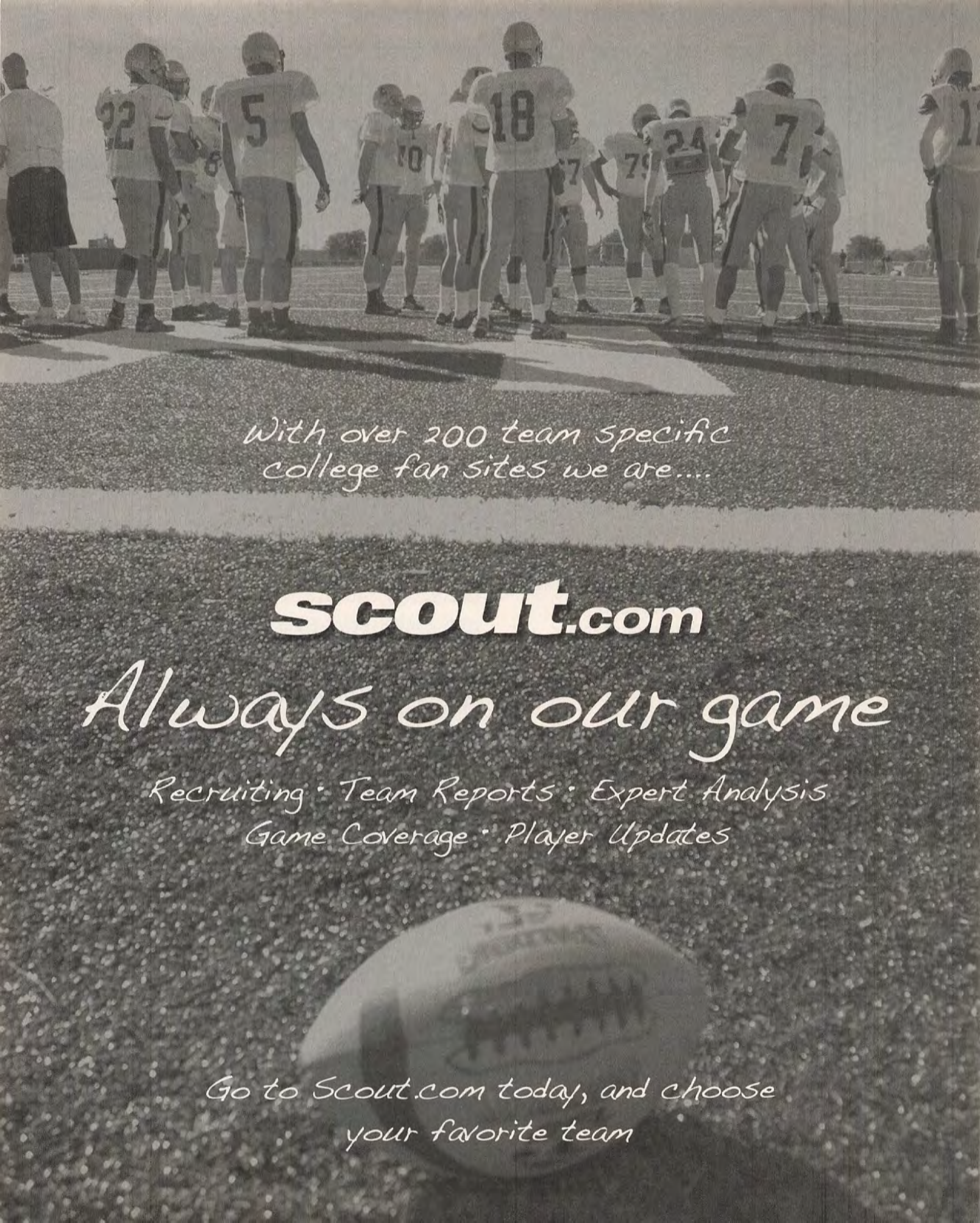
Be sure to check out our other displays that fit all your needs!

* High Gloss Black Base
* Ball Cradle
* Stackable
* Archival Safe
* Made in the U.S.A.
* See the Clear Difference

Made in the USA!!

US Patent #D498, 501

Made to fit youth or regulation size football. Inside dimensions 6.69" x 6.94" x 11.35." Base is removable for more versatile display options.


With over 200 team specific
college fan sites we are....
scout.com
Always on our game
Recruiting · Team Reports · Expert Analysis
Game Coverage · Player Updates
Go to Scout.com today, and choose
your favorite team

HOT LIST

2009 Alabama Football Prospects

2009 Alabama Football Prospects as determined by Andrew Bone of 'BAMA Magazine and Scout Media

Name	Pos.	Hgt.	Wgt.	Time	Hometown (High School)
Jonathan Atchison	SLB	6-3	215	4.6	Atlanta (Douglass)
Chris Bonds	DE	6-4	275	4.8	Columbia, S.C. (Richland NE)
*Michael Bowman	WR	6-5	220	4.6	Rossville, Ga. (Ridgeland)
Chad Bumphis	WR	5-10	180	4.4	Tupelo, Miss.
William Campbell	OT	6-4	327	N/A	Detroit, Mich. (Cass Tech)
Montrell Conner	RB	6-1	210	4.5	Monroe, La. (Ouachita Parish)
*Quinton Dial	DT	6-5	310	5.1	Pinson (Clay-Chalkville)
Jonathan Edwards	CB	5-9	185	4.5	Tuscaloosa (Central)
Willie Ferrell	LB	6-2	222	N/A	Tallahassee, Fla. (Florida A&M)
*D.J. Fluker	DE	6-6	327	4.9	Foley
Chuck Franks	SLB	6-4	215	4.8	Fayette (Fayette County)
Eric Gordon	CB	5-11	186	4.4	Nashville (Hillsboro)
Alvin Hines	S	6-0	195	4.5	Pelham
Mardrecas Hood	WR	6-3	180	4.5	Reform (Pickens Co.)
*Nico Johnson	LB	6-2	230	4.6	Andalusia
Kendall Kelly	WR	6-4	205	4.5	Gadsden (Gadsden City)
Greg King	LB	6-3	205	N/A	Memphis (Melrose)
Dre Kirkpatrick	CB	6-3	180	4.5	Gadsden (Gadsden City)
*A.J. McCarron	QB	6-4	180	4.8	Mobile (St. Paul's)
*Darius McKeller	OT	6-6	295	N/A	Jonesboro, Ga.
*Mike Marrow	FB	6-1	235	4.7	New Albany, Ohio
Bobby Massie	OT	6-7	330	N/A	Chatham, Va. (Hargrave Military)
*William Ming	DE	6-4	230	4.7	Athens
Barkevious Mingo	LB	6-4	200	4.6	West Monroe, La.
Brandon Moore	OT	6-5	310	N/A	Montgomery (Carver)
Clint Moseley	QB	6-4	196	4.7	Leroy
Morgan Moses	OT	6-7	332	N/A	Richmond, Va. (Meadowbrook)
Darren Myles	S	6-2	180	4.5	Atlanta (Carver)
Kevin Norwood	WR	6-3	180	4.5	Biloxi, Miss. (D'Iberville)
*Anthony Orr	DE	6-4	261	4.8	Harvest (Sparkman)
Tana Patrick	LB	6-4	220	4.6	Stevenson (North Jackson)
Jamal Patterson	WR	6-2	189	4.56	McDonough, Ga. (Henry Co.)
Pat Patterson	WR	6-2	215	4.6	Macon, Miss. (Noxubee Co.)
Rueben Randle	WR	6-3	195	4.5	Bastrop, La.
*Trent Richardson	RB	5-11	210	4.5	Pensacola (Escambia)
Gene Robinson	S	5-10	180	4.5	Memphis (Whitehaven)
Jonathan Scott	S	6-4	195	4.6	Daytona Beach, Fla. (Seabreze)
*Darrington Sentimore	DT	6-2	266	4.8	Destrehan, La.
Charles Skiddoway	OT	6-6	305	5.3	Eugene, Ore. (South Eugene)
Branden Smith	CB	6-0	180	4.4	Atlanta (Washington)
Petey Smith	LB	6-0	248	4.7	Seffner, Fla. (Armwood)
*Anthony Steen	OG	6-4	295	N/A	Clarksdale, Miss. (Lee Acad.)
Jonathan Stewart	LB	6-4	225	4.6	Shreveport, La. (Byrd)
Frankie Telfort	LB	5-11	197	4.55	Miami (Gulliver Prep)
Jamar Travis	DT	6-1	290	N/A	East Brewton (W.S. Neal)
Olivier Vernon	DE	6-2	230	4.5	Miami (American)
*Chance Warmack	OG	6-4	230	N/A	Atlanta (Westlake)
*Gerald West	CB	5-10	170	4.45	Mobile (Davidson)
De'Antwan Williams	RB	5-7	207	4.5	Woodbridge, Va.
*Kellen Williams	OT	6-5	288	N/A	Snellville, Ga. (Brookwood)
Ronnie Wingo	RB	6-1	215	4.6	St. Louis, Mo. (University)
*Rod Woodson	S	5-11	200	4.5	Olive Branch, Miss.

* Committed to Alabama

Where Are They Now?

Football 'source of pride' for Ben McLeod

It was 1934, and the Depression was in full tilt in Alabama. Roosevelt's New Deal, enacted just a year earlier, had yet to make itself felt. Amid the desolation there was one great hope for many Alabamians: the Crimson Tide football team.

"It was your source of pride," said Ben W. McLeod Jr., who at 95 is thought to be the Tide's oldest living former football player. "There was no money then."

McLeod played on the fabled 1934 national championship team that beat Stanford 29-13 in the Rose Bowl. That squad included names now etched in Crimson Tide lore: Bear Bryant, Don Hutson, Dixie Howell and Riley Smith.

"The state of Alabama didn't have a whole lot to be proud of back in those days," said local author Winston Groom, who wrote The Crimson Tide: An Illustrated History of Football at the University of Alabama. "The football team was a great source of interest."

A three-star athlete at Alabama, McLeod earned eight varsity letters in his time, winning one conference championship in basketball and three in baseball. A retired career Navy man, he lives in Pensacola, in the same house he bought upon arriving there. Tide memorabilia adorns the walls, and scrapbooks teem with old newspaper clippings.

On this recent morning, McLeod, whose wife of more than 60 years died just two years ago, sits in his living room, surrounded by family, including his son Ben W. McLeod III, who played defensive end and nose guard on Alabama's 1965 national championship team.

As a football player on the 1934 team, McLeod played end behind the famous Hutson-Bryant duo, seeing only eight minutes of action in the Rose Bowl (though he became a starter the next season). Still, he said he walked tall on campus, like all the other football players.

"Yeah, I became a prima donna," he said. "You better believe it."

Historians have called the 1926 Rose Bowl–in which Alabama defeated the University of Washington, 20-19–one of the most important college football games of all time. The game marked the first time a Southern team had ever competed in the Rose Bowl. Prior to that, the game usually pitted a Pacific Coast Conference team with one from the East Coast.

Alabama's victory in 1926 famously is known for lifting Southern pride, said Wayne Flynt, an Auburn University professor emeritus and Alabama historian. But Flynt said the 1934 win had the same effect.

In 1934, Southerners were still reeling from comments made by U.S. Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins, who a year before had called the region "an untapped market for shoes," suggesting that most folks below the Mason-Dixon walked around barefoot, according to Flynt.

"It (the Rose Bowl) was yet another way of responding to what Alabama had perceived was a putdown," he said.

Howell, an All-America halfback and punter who had a brief career with the Washington Redskins, dazzled the 85,000 in attendance that New Year's Day, catching two passes for touchdowns and completing nine.

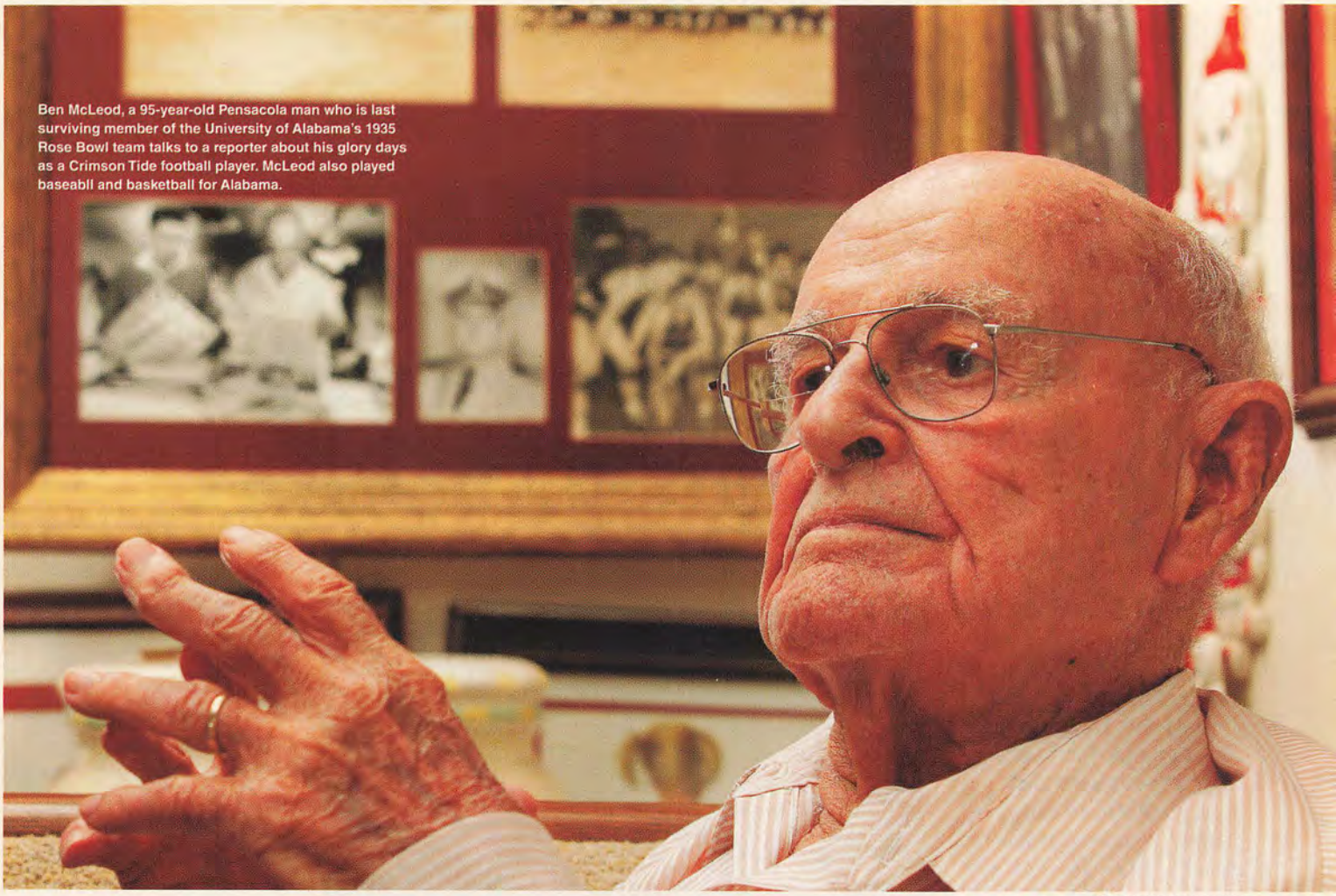
One of McLeod's most vivid memories involves the three-day train ride from Tuscaloosa to Pasadena. Along the way, he recalls meeting Johnny Mack Brown, a halfback on the 1926 team who had since become an actor in cowboy films. (Hollywood and college football were the only two U.S. industries that did not decline in the 1930s, Flynt said.)

The team stopped in Texas and Arizona to practice, McLeod said, and stayed in the Pasadena Hotel. "Everything was first class," he said.

On the return trip, McLeod and others on the basketball team stopped in New Orleans for a game against Tulane, which was followed days later with a game in Baton Rouge against LSU.

McLeod's memories of Tuscaloosa in those years evoke a hardscrabble existence. He recalls waiting on tables as a freshman, which was part of his basketball scholarship. McLeod said he lived on $48 the next year.

But McLeod was lucky, compared to many young men of his



Ben McLeod, a 95-year-old Pensacola man who is last surviving member of the University of Alabama's 1935 Rose Bowl team talks to a reporter about his glory days as a Crimson Tide football player. McLeod also played baseabll and basketball for Alabama.

Bill Starling/Mobile Press-Register

time, according to Flynt.

"For a whole generation of white kids, football and baseball were two of the most important ways out of poverty," said Flynt, adding that blacks had no chance of scholarships and held little interest in college sports as a result.

Born in Leaksville, Mississippi, McLeod and his family moved to Alabama, to the small mountain town of Geraldine, before he received a scholarship to Alabama.

While at Alabama, McLeod was tapped into Omicron Delta Kappa honor society. After graduating, he coached football at T.R. Miller, spending his summers playing semi-pro baseball in Alabama and North Carolina. As football coach, success did not come immediately. "I had a terrible first season and was almost run out of town," he said.

But McLeod battled back. The next year T.R. Miller went undefeated, with the defense giving up a mere seven points the entire season. Tide Football Coach Frank Thomas visited McLeod in Brewton and recommended he pursue college coaching. "He kind of half way put me on a pedestal," McLeod said.

The next day the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, and McLeod was soon stationed in Pensacola, where he's lived ever since.

In the ensuing years, McLeod followed Alabama football closely. Ben III said Bryant would occasionally ask him how his dad was doing. "Bryant never did get close to the ball players, except the quarterbacks," he said.

Bryant would stop by the house during recruiting trips to Pensacola and pay a visit, according to the elder McLeod. "Listen, there weren't many people in the world better than Bear Bryant," he said.

A picture of Hank Crisp–who served as head basketball coach for 19 seasons, not to mention athletics director and line coach under four different Alabama football coaches–still hangs on McLeod's wall.

"I didn't let him down," said McLeod, recalling the time Crisp asked him to start in place of teammate Zeke Kimbrough, who'd suffered a broken cheekbone.

Up until eight years ago, McLeod drove to Tuscaloosa with his wife for home football games. "All I know was that Alabama was good to me," he said. ■

EDITOR'S NOTE: This copyright article appeared July 27, 2008, in the Mobile Press-Register and is used by permission of the Press-Register. Ben McLeod is one of 62 former Alabama players who is profiled in the book by 'BAMA Editor Kirk McNair, "What It Means To Be Crimson Tide." The book is available for $27.95 plus shipping and handling and tax (if applicable) by calling 1-205-345-5074. Autograph by Kirk McNair is available.

'BAMA Scorecard

Notebooking Crimson Tide Sports

All-Star Candidates

At the midpoint of the season, noted college football reporter Phil Steele named nine Alabama players to his mid-season All-Southeastern Conference team. He had Bama players in 10 positions because Javier Arenas was named both a cornerback and kick return specialist.

On offense, Steele had junior offensive tackle Andre Smith as first team and freshman wide receiver Julio Jones, junior tailback Glen Coffee and senior center Antoine Caldwell second team, with junior guard Mike Johnson third team. On defense he had junior nose tackle Terrence Cody and sophomore linebacker Rolando McClain first team and safety Rashad Johnson second team.

As Alabama approaches the end of the season, it seems reasonable to think that McClain and Johnson are sure things for first team All-SEC on defense and Cody may make it despite having missed a couple of games with injury. On offense, Smith is a sure thing and Caldwell might make it, in part because he didn't get

Andre Smith

embarrassed playing against Cody like pre-season All-SEC candidate Jonathan Luigs of Arkansas did. Mike Johnson could slip in since he's been an SEC Offensive Lineman of the Week.

Coffee has quietly become one of the league's top rushers and may get consideration. Quarterback John Parker Wilson probably can't overcome the hype for Florida's Tim Tebow. A case could be made for tight end Nick Walker.

If Julio Jones doesn't make All-SEC, he'll certainly be a unanimous choice for Freshman All-SEC. Linebacker Dont'a Hightower, another true freshman starter for the Tide, and back-up tailback Mark Ingram also are strong candidates for the All-SEC frosh team.

Alabama's coaching staff selected players deemed worth of All-SEC honors and there were a few more Tiders on that list than conventional wisdom might have had it. Tide coaches nominated seven on offense, seven on defense and three special teams players.

On offense, the nominees are quarterback John Parker

Wilson, running back Glen Coffee, tight end Travis McCall, wide receiver Julio Jones, center Antoine Caldwell, guard Mike Johnson, and tackle Andre Smith.

The coaches' selections for defense are nose tackle Terrence Cody, defensive ends Bobby Greenwood and Brandon Deaderick, inside linebacker Rolando McClain, outside linebacker Dont'a Hightower, cornerback Javier Arenas, and safety Rashad Johnson.

Nominees from special teams are placekicker Leigh Tiffin, punter P.J. Fitzgerald, and return specialist Arenas.

There were a few surprises on that list (which was to be used to make the SEC Coaches Post-Season Awards in early December).

Travis McCall was nominated at tight end, even though fellow senior Nick Walker is generally considered to be the starter at tight end with McCall more often in a backfield slot position.

Dont'a Hightower was listed as an outside linebacker, even though the weakside linebacker in Bama's 3-4 system is an inside linebacker. However, when Alabama is in a 4-3 (which is much of the time), Hightower is often in an outside gap.

Many consider Kareem Jackson to be Bama's top cornerback, but the sophomore was not nominated and Arenas was.

Freshmen Nominees

Alabama's played a large number of freshmen during the season, some 16 having seen action by late in the year. Only a couple of other teams had played more freshmen.

As a result, Bama coaches had a large number of freshman players to nominate for the SEC Coaches All-Freshman team. They were:

Safety Mark Barron, defensive lineman Marcel Dareus, cornerback Robby Green, linebacker Dont'a Hightower, tailback Mark Ingram, wide receiver Julio Jones, wide receiver Marquis Maze, tight end Brad Smelley, and linebacker Courtney Upshaw.

McClain On Butkus List

Alabama does not have a contender for the most recognized college football award, the Heisman Trophy. This is hardly news. Alabama is the only football program of its stature to have never had a Heisman winner.

Bama does have some Heisman scalps, however, as the likes of Pat Sullivan of Auburn and Gino Torretta of Miami knows. They won Heisman Trophies, and then were soundly defeated by Alabama teams.

After the Heisman, which almost always goes to a quarterback or running back, it is likely the most competitive college football hardware battle is for the Butkus Award, which goes the nation's best linebacker.

Although he is only a sophomore, it is no surprise that Bama middle linebacker Rolando McClain is on the watch list for the Butkus.

Rashad Johnson

Smith And Cody

A pair of junior linemen, one on offense and one on defense, are among the finest players ever at Alabama, and both were recognized for their play at the national level in the 2008 season.

Andre Smith, a pre-season All-America offensive tackle, and Terrence Cody, a junior college transfer who was considered one of college football's most influential newcomers, were selected to the Sporting News mid-season All-America team.

Smith is a finalist for the Rotary Lombardi Award, which was to be presented December 10 in Houston. Last year as a sophomore Smith won the Jacobs Award, selected by SEC coaches as the best blocker in the league.

Cody is a finalist for the Bednarik Defensive Player of the Year Award presented by the Maxwell Football Club.

Smith and Caldwell

The Outland Trophy is presented to the nation's best interior offensive lineman. Alabama's Andre Smith and senior center Antoine Caldwell are on the watch list for the Outland Trophy.

Caldwell For Rimington

The Riminington Trophy is presented to the nation's top center. Last year the trophy was won by Jonathan Luigs of Arkansas. This

Home & Away
Long Sleeve
"Elephant Shirt"
Crimson Fine Line Twill
White Oxford Cloth
$65

The Locker Room

Call Toll Free
1-800-749-0992
1218 University Boulevard
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35401

www.locker-room.biz

year Luigs had the misfortune to go up against Alabama nose tackle Terrence Cody, and Luigs did not fare well.

Cody has said on many occasions that "by far" the best center he has gone up against has been Caldwell in practice. Caldwell, a three-year starter for Bama, elected to pass up the NFL draft last year in order to return for what he expected to be a very good Crimson Tide season in 2008.

Wilson Up For Two Awards

Alabama senior quarterback John Parker Wilson has broken virtually every Crimson Tide single season and career passing record. Considering that Alabama has a history of some pretty good quarterbacks, that is quite an achievement. The icing on the cake this season is that Wilson delivered statistically, but also was a leader as Alabama had an outstanding football season.

As a result, Wilson was nominated for two prestigious awards given to quarterbacks.

It was a sure bet Wilson would not be at the banquet for one presentation. The Johnny Unitas Golden Arm Award was to be presented in Baltimore, Maryland, on December 5, the evening before Wilson had some pressing business in Atlanta, where the SEC Championship Game was to be played on December 6.

The Golden Arm Award is presented annually to the nation's top senior quarterback.

Wilson had a better chance to make the announcement of the Davey O'Brien Award, which is presented to the nation's best college quarterback. That announcement, as many college football awards announcements, was to be made on ESPN on December 11.

John Parker Wilson

The O'Brien winner will be honored February 16 at the 32nd annual Davey O'Brien Awards Dinner at the Fort Worth Club in Fort Worth, Texas, on February 16.

He is the Crimson Tide's season and career leader in completions, passing yards, passing touchdowns and attempts.

Ten games into his senior season, Wilson had guided the Crimson Tide to a 10-0 record and a number one national ranking. The Hoover native had passed for 1,627 yards while completing 59.1 percent of his passes with eight touchdowns. Wilson had been even better on the road in hostile environments this season, completing 63.4 percent of his passes with four touchdowns and a 136.18 passing efficiency rating.

Alabama fans had a chance to see the O'Brien Award when it was on display on the quad prior to this season's Mississippi State game.

Johnson Makes A Move

Alabama senior safety Rashad Johnson was on the watch list for the Bronko Nagurski Award, presented each year by the Football Writers Association of America. He made a good case for himself in Bama's overtime win over LSU in Baton Rouge. Johnson had three key interceptions (one for a touchdown, one leading to a touchdown, and one in overtime to leave LSU with zero points on its possession). Following that game both Walter Camp and Bronko Nagurski foundations named him national defensive player of the week. The Nagurski Award was to be presented in Charlotte, North Carolina, on December 7.

It was more than a little surprising that Johnson did not make the list of semifinalists for the Jim Thorpe Award, which is given to the nation's best defensive back.

Coffee In Running

Youngsters like Alabama junior tailback Glen Coffee might not understand how a running award is named for a Walker. But the Doak Walker Award is given annually to the nation's top running back, and Coffee is a semifinalist for the honor. The Award is presented by the Guaranty Bank SMU Athletic Forum Board.

The recipient was to be announced on the College Football Awards Show on December 11 in Orlando.

Coffee showed a smart streak in responding to the nomination. He said, "I would not have been able to accomplish any of this without the best offensive line in the country. Andre Smith, Antoine Caldwell, all of those guys, just open huge holes to run through."

His 218-yard effort against Kentucky was the sixth-best in Alabama history and he became one of only nine men at Bama to have rushed for 1,000 yards in a season. He also had the best rushing average in the SEC and had the two longest runs, 87 against Arkansas and 78 against Kentucky.

The Award is named after three-time SMU All-American running back and 1948 Heisman Trophy winner Doak Walker.

Coffee and Wilson had been on the watch list for the Maxwell

Leigh Tiffin

Award, given to the nation's outstanding player.

Tiffin A Groza Nominee

Alabama junior placekicker Leigh Tiffin was a nominee for the Lou Groza Collegiate Placekicker Award, presented by the FedEx Orange Bowl. Among Tiffin's achievements this year was a 54-yard field goal that was the longest in the SEC this year. It was the third longest in Alabama history, exceeded only by his father, Van Tiffin (57 vs. Texas A&M in 1985) and by Ryan Pflugner (55) against Arkansas in 1998.

Coach of the Year

Southeastern Conference Coach of the Year voting should be just about unanimous for Alabama's Nick Saban. Bama was picked to finish third in the SEC Western Division and wrapped up the division championship while also being ranked the number one team in the nation.

Saban is a leading candidate for National Coach of the Year.

That won't be exactly new to him. He won the Paul Bryant Coach of the Year Award in 2003 when he coached LSU to the national championship.

He has been announced as a finalist for another national coach of the year award, the George Munger Award, presented by the Maxwell Football Club.

On Being Number One

When Alabama took over the number one spot in the nation's college football polls late in 2008, it came as a surprise to many that it was the first time Bama had been ranked number one during regular season play since 1980, when Paul Bryant was Crimson Tide head coach.

Alabama had won a national championship since then, under Coach Gene Stallings in 1992, but the Tide was not number one until after defeating top-ranked Miami, 34-13, in the Sugar Bowl at the end of the season.

Prior to moving into first place this year, the Crimson Tide had spent a surprisingly few number of weeks ranked number one in regular season, only 24. Considering Bama has won six Associated Press national championships, that is efficient time at number one. Several of Alabama's AP national titles were won in bowl games and a couple of times Bama moved into the number one spot late in the season.

Coffee Gets 1,000

Junior tailback Glen Coffee joined a fairly exclusive group of Alabama running backs this year when he went over the 1,000-yard rushing mark. There have been only 13 occasions by nine different backs with 1,000-yard rushing seasons. Coffee became the first Tider to crack the mark since Kenneth Darby in 2005.

Adding To Win Totals

When Alabama defeated Ole Miss in Tuscaloosa on October 18, it marked the 300th Crimson Tide victory in Tuscaloosa. Bama had played just 362 games in the city and had a record of 300-59-3, a winning percentage of .833. In games played in the current stadium, originally Denny Stadium and now Bryant-Denny Stadium, Alabama has a record of 215-46-3 (82 per cent) through the Ole Miss game.

Alabama's 27-21 win over LSU in Baton Rouge pulled Alabama closer to the 800-win mark. Following that game, Alabama had an all-time record of 796-314-43 (70.9 per cent), which was tied with Penn State for sixth in the nation.

With four games remaining in the season (two regular season, SEC Championship Game, and a bowl game), the 800-mark was possible in the 2008 season. This is Bama's 114th season of football.

Winning 10 A Year

After Alabama had defeated LSU, 27-21, to run the Crimson Tide record to 10-0, it marked the 29th season for Alabama to have a 10-win season. For many years, Alabama was the NCAA leader in 10-win seasons. Oklahoma has moved ahead of Bama in recent years and should have its 31st 10-win season this year.

Ten wins is an achievement in college football. There are many schools where the fans can easily count on one hand the number of 10-win seasons in their history; others who have had only a few coaches, perhaps only one coach, deliver 10 victories. Part of it goes to shorter seasons. Prior to 1970, college football teams had 10 or even nine-game regular season schedules. Now there can be 12 regular season games, a conference championship game, and a bowl game, so getting to the 10-win mark is a little less daunting.

In his 25 years as head coach at Alabama, Paul Bryant had 11 seasons in which the Tide had at least 10 victories, four of those in seasons where the regular season was only 10 games.

It is a remarkable testament to Alabama football to consider the achievements of the seven men who have been Alabama coaches in the 26 seasons (including this one) following Bryant.

All seven have had at least one 10-win season.

Ray Perkins did it in 1986; Bill Curry in 1989; Gene Stallings in 1991, 1992, 1994, and 1996; Mike DuBose in 1999; Dennis Franchione in 2002; Mike Shula in 2005; and Nick Saban in 2008.

Additionally, four Alabama coaches achieved 10-win seasons before Bryant—Xen Scott, Bryant's fellow Hall of Fame coaches Wallace Wade and Frank Thomas, and Harold "Red" Drew. That makes a dozen Crimson Tide football coaches who have coached teams to 10 or more victories in a season.

Glen Coffee

Steele, Gee On Coaches' List

Alabama men's senior basketball players Alonzo Gee and Ronald Steele have been selected to the second team of the 2008-09 Preseason

Southeastern Conference All-Conference team as voted by the league's coaches.

Gee, from Riviera Beach, Fla., started all 33 of the Crimson Tide's games last season. He was third on the team with 14.5 points per game and second on the team with 6.8 rebounds per game. He led the Tide in scoring in 10 games last season. In his career, Gee has 1,150 points, 499 rebounds, 127 assists, 120 steals and 35 blocked shots.

Steele, from Birmingham, was a Preseason All-America in 2007-08 before an injury forced him to sit out the 2007-08 season. Alabama's all-time leader in free-throw accuracy (.868), Steele has started 88 of 89 games he has been in a Crimson Tide uniform. For his career, Steele has 920 points, 331 rebounds, 397 assists, 98 steals and 14 blocked shots. He currently ranks among UA's career leaders in free-throw percentage (first, .868), three-point field goal percentage (third, .421), assists (eighth, 397), assists per game (fifth, 4.46), and minutes played (fifth, 1,191).

Men's Golf Sixth

The Alabama men's golf team, which lost most of its firepower from the team that challenged for the national championship in 2008, is still in the thick of the national race for 2009. Coach Jay Seawell's Bama team won the Jerry Pate National Intercollegiate championship for the third straight year in fall competiton and Bama also had a second, a fifth and a sixth in top rated tournaments. Alabama was ranked sixth in the nation following fall play.

Oklahoma State was ranked number one. SEC teams ranked in front of the Tide were Georgia (third) and Tennessee (fifth).

Men's Tennis Leaders

Alabama's fall men's tennis season had what Coach Billy Pate called "a certain degree of success and positives." Some of those came in the Seminole Invitational at Florida State, the final event of fall play. The Crimson Tide duo of Andrew Felsenthal and Trey Walton took a doubles win and each also had a singles win.

Pate said, "We're excited about the upcoming season, and our guys are going to be putting forth a lot of focus and attention to fitness and technical development in the next two months to be ready for the spring season."

The Tide returns to the court January 9, 2009 when it travels to Florida for the Key Biscayne Invitational. The first dual match at home takes place January 24 when Alabama hosts both Troy and Furman.

Nick Saban

Wins In Coaches Classic

Alabama's women's tennis team hosted this year's SEC Fall Coaches Classic, and the squad of Coach Jenny Mainz had good success.

Tiffany Welcher and Alice Tunaru and the doubles pair of Merrit Emergy and Tunaru all won main draw finals for Bama. In addition, the Crimson Tide picked up four wins in consolation rounds.

Mainz said, "I'm really pleased. We really did a good job of finishing the fall season meeting our objectives and finishing with confidence. We wanted to come out and be ready to play hard. I definitely feel like we made a statement."

Hall of Fame

Longtime Alabama assistant football coach and associate athletics director Sam Bailey, who ran much of the athletics department's day-to-day operations under Paul Bryant, has been inducted into the Southern Arkansas Hall of Fame. Alabama's track stadium is named for the late Sam Bailey.

All-SEC

Alabama sophomore forward Brooke Rogers of Cincinnati was named All-SEC second team in soccer. "I am happy she got recognized," first-year Coach Todd Bramble said. "She scored big goals in big games against tough conference opponents. She had to sacrifice as a reserve but she has added something to the game each time and it is reflective in the stats."

With the honor Rogers becomes the first member of the Crimson Tide to earn first or second team accolades since Libby Probst was tabbed to the second team in 2004. Justine Bernier and Victoria Frederick were named to the All-Freshman team last season.

Rogers paced the Tide during conference action with eight points on three goals and two assists. Overall Rogers was tied for third on the squad with 10 points on three goals and four assists. Her four helpers were tied for the team lead.

In two of the three games the forward scored this season Alabama earned key conference victories on the road. Rogers scored and handed out an assist in a 2-0 win to open league play at Vanderbilt. Rogers then tallied another three points with a goal and an assist in a 3-1 win at Arkansas.

Good Finish

The Alabama Rowing team finished off its fall season with a strong showing on the Tennessee River at the Head of the Hooch Regatta, including a gold, silver and bronze medal performance by the Crimson Tide's novice crews.

"All our crews rowed well," Alabama Coach Larry Davis said. "Our novices are much farther along because of the recruited athletes that are a part of those boats. It was the novices' best showing at the Head of the Hooch since we became an NCAA Division I program." Bama is in just its third season.

"We have picked up speed, and while we continue to narrow the gap, we still have a lot of work to do," Davis said. "I'm very encouraged by our speed and the way we keep reeling the other crews in."

Davis said the performance in the final event of the fall "was a good reminder that we can't let up. Over the next two months, our ladies have to continue to work very hard so that we can pickup in the spring season ahead of where we left off today. We're picking up time on teams like Tennessee and Clemson, teams that have been to the NCAA Championships and the NCAA finals and we have to get hammering away because we're not satisfied with being in the middle of the pack. We're going after the top programs." ■

2008-09 Alabama Winter Sports Schedules

Women's Track & Field

DATE	EVENT
Jan. 9-10	@ Clemson Invitational
Jan. 31	@ Nebraska Invitational
Feb. 6-7	@ Kentucky Invitational
Feb. 13-14	@ Arkansas Invitational
Feb. 27-March 1	SEC Championships @ Lexington, Ky.
March 13-14	NCAA Championships @ College Station, Texas

(Men's Track & Field schedule not available)
All times central

Men's and Women's Swimming & Diving

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
Sept. 27	Delta State (M&W) & Vanderbilt (W)	1:00
Oct. 11	@ FSU	Noon
Oct. 24	@ SMU Classic (W)	6:00
Nov. 7	@ LSU	3:00
Nov. 8	Centenary & UNO @ New Orleans	11:00
Nov. 14	Western Kentucky	3:00
Nov. 20	@ Georgia Tech diving	TBA
Nov. 21	Auburn	All Day
Dec. 4	US Short @ Atlanta	All Day
Dec. 18	@ Auburn diving	TBA
Jan. 3	@ Tennessee diving	TBA
Jan. 17	@ Kentucky	1:00
Jan. 31	South Carolina & Georgia	1:00
Feb. 18	SEC Championships @ Auburn	All Day
Feb. 28	@ Georgia Invite	All Day
March 8	@ Auburn Invite	All Day
March 13	NCAA Zone Diving, Knoxville	
March 26	NCAA Championships @ College Station, Texas	

Gymnastics

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
Jan. 9	@ Auburn	7:00
Jan. 16	Kentucky	7:30
Jan. 23	@ Georgia	6:30
Jan. 27	@ Arkansas	7:00
Feb. 6	Denver	7:30
Feb. 13	LSU	7:30
Feb. 20	@ Florida	6:00
Feb. 27	Auburn	7:30
March 1	Penn State & Ohio State @ Penn State	1:00
March 6	Stanford	7:30
March 13	North Carolina & Oklahoma	7:30
March 21	SEC Championships @ Nashville	4:00
April 4	NCAA Regionals	6:00
April 16-18	NCAA Championships @ Lincoln, Neb.	

Men's Basketball

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
Nov. 2	Crimson-White Exh.	4:00
Nov. 6	Faulkner Exh.	7:00
Nov. 13	Belhaven Exh.	7:00
Nov. 16	Mercer	6:00
Nov. 19	Florida A&M	8:00 (CSS)
Nov. 24-26	Maui Invitational	
Nov. 24	Oregon	11:00
Nov. 25	North Carolina or Chalminade	TBA
Nov. 26	Texas, St. Joseph's, Notre Dame or Indiana	TBA
Dec. 2	Alabama A&M	7:00
Dec. 6	Louisiana-Lafayette	6:00
Dec. 13	Texas A&M	7:00 (CSS)
Dec. 17	Tennessee State	7:00 (CSS)
Dec. 22	Chattanooga	7:00
Dec. 28	Yale	6:00
Dec. 30	Quincy	7:00
Jan. 3	Georgia Tech	2:00 (FoxS)
Jan. 6	@ Clemson	8:00 (FoxS)
Jan. 11	LSU	12:30 or 3:00 (Raycom)
Jan. 14	@ Mississippi State	7:00
Jan. 17	@ Auburn	1:00
Jan. 21	Ole Miss	7:00
Jan. 24	Kentucky	2:00 (Raycom)
Jan. 29	@ Arkansas	8:00 (ESPN)
Jan. 31	Georgia	6:00 (FoxS)
Feb. 5	@ Vanderbilt	6:00 (ESPN)
Feb. 8	@ LSU	Noon (Raycom)
Feb. 14	South Carolina	2:00 (Raycom)
Feb. 18	@ Florida	6:00
Feb. 21	Mississippi State	2:00 (Raycom)
Feb. 25	Arkansas	7:00
Feb. 28	@ Ole Miss	3:00 (Raycom)
March 3	Auburn	8:00 (ESPN)
March 8	@ Tennessee	11:00 (CBS)
March 12-15	SEC Tournament @ Tampa, Fla.	

Women's Basketball

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
Nov. 8	West Alabama	TBA
Nov. 14	Centenary	TBA
Nov. 18	Samford	TBA
Nov. 22	@ Hampton	TBA
Nov. 25	Alabama State	TBA
Nov. 28-29	@ Nuggett Classic, Reno, Nev.	
Dec. 3	UCF	TBA
Dec. 7	Sam Houston State	TBA
Dec. 14	@ MTSU	TBA
Dec. 17	Florida A&M	
Dec. 22	Austin Peay	TBA
Dec. 29-30	Tide Holiday Classic	
Dec. 29	Belmont	TBA
Dec. 30	Ball State or Richmond	TBA
Jan. 3	@ SE Louisiana	TBA
Jan. 8	Vanderbilt	7:00
Jan. 11	@ LSU	2:00
Jan. 15	Kentucky	TBA
Jan. 18	@ Ole Miss	2:00
Jan. 22	@ Auburn	8:00
Jan. 25	Georgia	2:00
Feb. 1	@ Vanderbilt	2:00
Feb. 5	Florida	TBA
Feb. 8	Auburn	2:00
Feb. 12	@ Tennessee	6:00
Feb. 15	@ South Carolina	2:00
Feb. 19	Ole Miss	6:00
Feb. 22	@ Arkansas	2:00
March 1	Mississippi State	TBA
March 5-8	SEC Tournament@ North Little Rock, Ark.	

Vonage™

UNLIMITED Local & Long Distance Calling

$24.99

per month†

Switch to Vonage and Save up to $300 a Year on Your Phone Bill‡!

Say No to Higher Phone Bills!

- Our price starts low and stays low℠. Satisfaction Guaranteed<!
- No bundles, no hassles, no introductory pricing — just reliable phone service at a reliable price!

Easy to Switch, Easy to Save

- 25 Premium Features at no extra cost
- Free calls to 5 select European countries[v]
- International locations for as low as 1 cent per minute[v]
- Keep your current phone number^
- Vonage works with your existing home phone and high-speed Internet connection
- Award-winning quality and reliability

Special Offer

$24.99†/month

Try 1 Month FREE!

see below for details

Call: 1.800.581.7132

FREE MONTH OFFER ON $24.99 UNLIMITED RESIDENTIAL PLAN ONLY. PLAN FEE WAIVED BUT ALL OTHER CHARGES APPLY. NEW SUBSCRIBERS ONLY.

V Free Calls to Europe Offer (Available Only with Unlimited Residential Plan) Does Not Apply To Certain Call Types, Such As Calls to Cell Phones, and is Limited to Italy, France, Spain, UK and Ireland. Other International Rates May Vary. See http://vonage.com/intrates for Details. Vonage 911 service operates differently than traditional 911. See www.vonage.com/911 for details. High-Speed Internet Required. Alarms and other systems may not be compatible. † Rates exclude: broadband service, regulatory and activation fees and certain other charges, equipment, taxes, & shipping. International calls billed per minute. Offer valid in the US only. See Terms of Service for details. ‡ $300 savings claim based on 3/07 survey of competing land line service providers. For complete details visit www.vonage.com/compare1. <30-day money back guarantee is refunded for any paid activation fee, 1st month service charge, initial shipping charges and termination fee. Applicable only to first ordered line per account. Available only in the event of timely cancellation for subscribers who have not exceeded 500 minutes of usage and who obtain a valid return authorization number from 1-VONAGE-HELP, and return of equipment in original condition and packaging within 14 days of cancellation. Refund will not include charges for taxes, international usage, payphone calls to Vonage toll free numbers and directory assistance. Offer revocable. ^ Where available. The number transfer process takes approximately 10 business days from the time you confirm your transfer request. ©2008 Vonage.